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THE
KINGDOM AND THE MESSIAH

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THE KINGDOM AND THE MESSIAH

BY

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TO

MY HONOURED CHIEF AND COLLEAGUE

DANIEL MINER GORDON, D.D., LL.D.

PRINCIPAL OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
KINGSTON, CANADA

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PREFACE

It has long been recognised that the message of Jesus was related, in some of its aspects, to apocalyptic Judaism. The closeness of this relation has become ever more apparent as we have advanced to a larger knowledge of the surviving Jewish literature. Criticism is gradually settling towards the conviction that the apocalyptic element is not merely accidental to our Lord's teaching, but is all-pervading and determinative. The discovery is still so recent that there is a tendency on all hands to exaggerate its significance. Conservative and radical thinkers alike have eagerly laid hold of it, and have endeavoured to press it into the service of their favourite theological views.

In the present book I have sought to interpret the Gospel record on the ground of the new hypothesis, with special reference to the attitude of Jesus towards the two cardinal apocalyptic ideas of the Kingdom of God and the Messiah. The subject is a vast and

intricate one; and ought, perhaps, to have been treated at greater length, and with a fuller elaboration of detail. But I have purposely limited the field of discussion in order to concentrate attention on a few questions, which are to my mind of fundamental importance.

While contending, it may be with a somewhat one-sided emphasis, for the apocalyptic view, I have tried to maintain throughout that the permanent validity of the Christian Gospel is in no way affected by the particular framework in which it was first given. According to any interpretation, Jesus delivered His message under forms which were provided for Him by the thought of His age, and which were bound to grow less intelligible as time went on. I find it difficult to understand why His message should be supposed to lose its value, because it happened to be proclaimed in the terms of Jewish eschatology. These were at least as adequate as the categories which were borrowed at a later date from Greek speculation; and in not a few respects afforded a far grander expression to the essential truths of Christianity.

My debts to the voluminous literature which has gathered around the subject in recent years have been partially acknowledged in footnotes. It would have been easy to multiply these acknowledgments;

but while availing myself freely of the work of previous writers, I have usually adopted their suggestions with important reserves or modifications. It seemed unfair to make them responsible for opinions with which, in the altered form, they would probably disagree.

My best thanks are due to Rev. William Morgan, Tarbolton, Scotland, who has helped me to revise the proofs, and has allowed me to take full advantage of his wide reading and luminous judgment.

E. F. SCOTT.

KINGSTON, CANADA,
5th November 1910.

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THE KINGDOM AND THE MESSIAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE teaching of Jesus is based throughout on His "Gospel" or proclamation of the Kingdom of God. To this conception of a divine sovereignty, shortly to be realised, He gave a new and far-reaching significance; but He did not originate the conception itself. It had inspired the message of John the Baptist, His forerunner. It had passed through a long development in the centuries of Jewish history which had followed the return from exile. It can be traced back through the writings of the Old Testament to the very beginnings of the religion of Israel. The idea of the Kingdom of God which thus meets us under varying forms at many different periods of the nation's history may be regarded as in some ways the fundamental idea of Jewish religious thinking; and

its adoption by Jesus was no mere matter of accident. The new revelation attached itself, naturally and instinctively, to that which was central and most vital in the old.

In order to understand what the Kingdom meant to Jesus, we require to look back over the previous phases of the conception as we find it in the Old Testament and in the later Jewish literature. There is much in the development that is still uncertain and obscure. The available evidence on not a few important points awaits further investigation; and occasionally the evidence fails us altogether, and has to be filled out by conjecture. Nevertheless, as a result of the critical inquiries of the last fifty years, we can now distinguish at least the chief steps in the preparation for our Lord's message of the Kingdom.

From the beginning of their life as a nation, the people of Israel had considered themselves to be under the kingship of God. This was in accordance with the primitive Semitic belief that the tribal god was king of the land assigned to his worshippers; and as Moab, Ammon, Philistia had each their divine overlords, so Jahveh was king of Israel. The title, however, assumed a new meaning when the ancient religious ideas had been purified and deepened by the great prophets. It was now perceived that the worship of Jahveh was different in kind from that of the heathen gods. As the God of righteousness He was something

more than the tutelary deity of His people. He was the living and true God; and although He had revealed Himself to Israel alone, a time would come when He would assert His sovereignty over all nations. In the various passages where the name "King" is ascribed to Jahveh by the psalmists and prophets, it carries with it a peculiar emphasis. "God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth."[1] "Sing praises unto our king; for God is the king of the whole earth. God reigneth over the heathen; God sitteth on the throne of his holiness."[2] In the prophetic teaching, the idea of God's sovereignty almost succeeds in liberating itself from national limitations. Amos can declare that God's choice of the people of Israel, instead of securing them a special favour and exemption, has laid upon them a higher responsibility.[3] Micah foretells a day when all peoples shall flow unto the house of God upon Mount Zion.[4] Isaiah, in perhaps the loftiest of Old Testament anticipations, sees Israel "a third with Assyria and with Egypt" in the service of the true God.[5] These, however, are only inspired glimpses, rare even on the highest levels of prophecy. The prevailing effect of the larger conception of God's sovereignty was to impress the nation with a new sense of its unique privilege. Israel, as the people of the one supreme God, occupied the central place on the world's stage,

[1] Ps 74^{12}. [2] Ps 47^{6-8}. [3] Am 3^{2}.
[4] Mic $4^{1.\ 2}$; cf. Is $2^{2.\ 3}$. [5] Is 19^{24}.

and was destined to inherit the future. The triumph of God would mean the triumph of His people. His universal Kingdom would have its seat at Jerusalem, and its blessings would be mediated to all other nations through Israel. This belief in the identity of the Kingdom of God with the pre-eminence of the favoured race, is the normal belief even of the great prophets.

The disasters of the exile seemed for the moment to shatter the national cause, and with it the growing faith in the supremacy of the national God. He had failed to protect His own servants, and had allowed them to be driven forth from the one land in which He could be rightly worshipped. In His conflict with the gods of the heathen, He had apparently been overcome. But the belief in His sovereignty emerged with renewed vigour and assurance from this eclipse. The prophets, and Jeremiah more especially, had always insisted on the righteousness of God, which required Him to punish all disobedience. In the light of this teaching the people learned to think of their exile, not as the failure of the destiny promised them, but as the necessary discipline and purification whereby they would be enabled to fulfil it more gloriously. So far from disappearing, the faith in the supremacy of Jahveh was only confirmed by the sojourn in Babylon. As they grew familiar with the imposing idolatries which had seemed for the hour to conquer, the higher minds of Israel were more and more convinced of the

measureless superiority of their own religion. They recognised that their faith in Jahveh had more to justify it than mere racial tradition and prejudice. He was manifestly different from the most exalted of the pagan gods, and would yet assert Himself in His true power as King of the world.

From the time of the exile, the conception of the Kingdom of God began to bear a more reasoned and definite character. Israel, which had been secluded hitherto among the petty neighbouring tribes, was now confronted with a world-wide empire. It saw the might of heathenism no longer as something dispersed and fragmentary, but as a single power opposing itself to the cause of God. Hence the idea was rendered possible of a higher, spiritual kingdom over against the hostile world. This idea, although not yet completely formulated, underlies the teaching of Ezekiel and the second Isaiah; and the historical conditions of the subsequent period served to bring it into increasing prominence. The Babylonian empire gave place to the Persian, and the Persian to the Macedonian. In each successive age the dominion of the world was in the hands of one great power in which the forces of heathenism were united; while Israel always stood alone, on the side of the true God. The conception of two Kingdoms, eternally opposed to one another, was further accentuated by the dualism which had crept in from Persia. Already in the Old Testament we can trace the beginnings of the later

doctrine of Satan; and in view of this doctrine the antagonism of Israel to the heathen world assumed a larger significance. It was mysterious and symbolical. It represented on the earthly stage a conflict that was in process everywhere between God and His Adversary.

The sovereignty of God as it comes before us in the Old Testament, has therefore two aspects. On the one hand, God is already supreme. He has created heaven and earth, and governs all things according to His wisdom. He is Lord over the heathen, although they know Him not, and is able to bring their counsels to nâught, and to overrule their wickedness for good. While He is King of the world, He is King in a special sense of His people, to whom He has revealed Himself, and by whom alone He is expressly acknowledged and worshipped. But, on the other hand, His Kingdom is conceived as lying in the future. The nations have not yet submitted themselves to Him, although a day will come when He will overthrow all alien powers and vindicate His sole authority. Israel itself has not yet yielded to Him an entire allegiance. The actual nation, in its sin and disobedience, only contains within it the germ of what will ultimately be the true people of God. Of these two conceptions, that which regards the Kingdom as future is the deeper and more characteristic. The aim of the prophets in all their teaching is to point forward beyond the present, in which the

kingship of God is still latent, to a glorious coming age when it will be realised.

Since the present order of things is destined to give place to another, all history is leading up to the great transition, or "day of Jahveh." It can be gathered from a well-known passage of Amos[1] that the idea of a "day of Jahveh," when God would exalt and justify His people Israel, had long been familiar; but Amos himself gives it a new direction. He declares that Israel, like the heathen world, will come within the scope of God's judgment. The Lord must regenerate His own people by a fiery discipline before He can bring in the promised age of peace and righteousness. This warning of Amos was repeated by all the pre-exilic prophets, and always more emphatically as the external dangers became more threatening. In the face of these it could be doubted no longer that a terrible doom was impending over Israel. The national disasters would issue in the "day of Jahveh" which would be at once the culmination of the distress, and the beginning of a new period when all things would be restored. After the exile, the anticipation of the "day" took on itself a different colour. Israel had now endured the punishment, had "received at the Lord's hand double for all its sins,"[2] and might contemplate the future with serenity and hope. God would come to judgment, but His wrath would fall on the nations that knew

[1] Am 5^{20}. [2] Is 40^{2}.

Him not. The "day" would be preceded by wars and tumults,—all the forces of heathenism leaguing themselves together for a last assault on Israel. But God would interpose for the deliverance of His chosen people. All enemies would be vanquished and destroyed, and God would establish in Zion a Kingdom that would last for ever.

Concerning the nature of this future Kingdom the prophets say comparatively little. They are content with the assurance that in the coming time God alone will reign and re-fashion all things in accordance with His will. But allowing for much in their language that is figurative and poetical we can make out certain constant features in the anticipation. (1) For Israel the new age will be one of dominion over the nations and of internal peace and prosperity. The house of David will be restored to its ancient glory. The ten tribes which had disappeared into captivity will return to the mother-land. The oppression of the poor by the rich will come to an end, and princes and judges will rule in righteousness. (2) The world generally will share in the happiness of Israel. Through the chosen people all races of men will be brought to a knowledge of the true God, and will receive His favour and blessing. Wars will entirely cease. The law of God will be obeyed everywhere, and will ensure a universal security and well-being. (3) The blessedness of the new age will be reflected in the world of nature as in human society. Sun and moon

will shine with a sevenfold brightness; the earth will yield a more abundant increase; beasts of the forest will lose their fierceness; waste places will blossom into gardens. In that future time all that is sorrowful and unlovely will be done away. Men will turn to God with a changed heart; and will enter upon a new life in a renovated world.

The conception of the Kingdom of God has thus its beginnings in Old Testament prophecy; but during the two centuries before Christ it underwent important modifications. The great patriotic struggle against Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.) gave a new direction to Jewish thought as well as to Jewish history. Hitherto, while always conscious of an antagonism between themselves and the surrounding world, the people had been left unmolested. Their sense of a peculiar vocation was gradually weakening and might eventually have died away. But the attempt now made to destroy their religion by means of a violent persecution, had for its result a great awakening of the national consciousness. Israel and the hostile world,—Israel's God and the gods of the heathen, had been thrown into the sharpest conflict; and the ancient hopes at once assumed a fresh vitality and meaning. The Book of Daniel, which comes to us out of the central period of the struggle, marks the commencement of a new phase of speculation on the Kingdom of God.

The Book of Daniel is the earliest and incomparably the most important of the apocalyptic writings, which were henceforth to replace the literature of prophecy. It is true that the prophetic books themselves contain an element which may be described as apocalyptic. Relief is sought from an almost intolerable present in glowing anticipations of a great future in which all evils will be righted. By the prophets, however, this future is brought into organic relation to the present. The world that will be is not merely visionary and fantastic, but is the existing world, with its joys and interests and activities all purified and heightened. Its happiness will be the outcome of the struggle and discipline now in progress, and the thought of it illumines them with a new meaning. In Ezekiel and the second Zechariah we meet with a closer approximation to the genuine type of apocalyptic thought. Prophecy tended to become fanciful and irresponsible when it was cut off from the living interests of an organised state. But even Ezekiel, though his hope embodies itself in purely imaginative forms, looks to a future which he expects to see in some measure realised. At the bottom of his visionary scheme there is a sober programme for the constitution of the new Israel, soon to emerge out of the ruins of the past.

The apocalyptic literature proper was not so much a development of prophecy as a substitute for it, introduced artificially at a later date, when the true prophetic impulse had died down. In this manner

we must explain the *derivative* character of the apocalyptic writings. They might seem, at first sight, to be entirely the product of a wild fantasy, working in the void, and creating extravagant images at haphazard. But on closer examination we find that they have their origin in literary art and reflection. The apocalyptist does not create. He does not speak for himself out of an immediate inspiration, but deals laboriously with material given to him. He compiles and annotates, draws out the hidden inferences of sacred texts, resolves the facts and traditions of the past into dim allegories. He is himself aware that he offers no original message, and veils his individuality under some consecrated name—Enoch, Ezra, Baruch, Solomon. When we begin to analyse the writings, we are able to trace almost every passage back to its sources. The imagery is that of the Old Testament, pieced together in arbitrary combinations. The hopes are those of the prophets, although the spontaneity has gone out of them, and they are determined by rule and calculation. Apocalyptic, as we know it through the surviving books, bears the same relation to prophecy as Rabbinism bears to the Mosaic Law. In both cases we have to do with interpretation and corollary. Amidst all that seems novel and imposing there is no independent thought, but only the repetition, in varying forms and with an altered emphasis, of that which has been written.

It is necessary to keep in mind this derivative

character of apocalyptic when we seek to estimate its place in the religious life of Judaism. The view has been maintained[1] that it stands for a reaction of the more purely religious spirit against the mechanical obedience demanded by the Law. As in the Middle Ages the more thoughtful minds sought refuge in mysticism when the Church had become wholly externalised, so the pious among the Jews found a visionary world still open to them when they were well-nigh crushed by the legal yoke. The protest against the narrowing and hardening of religion, which had formerly expressed itself in prophecy, was now taken up by apocalyptic. This view, however, attractive as it is, cannot be justified by the facts. Apocalyptic thought, so far from representing any attempt to escape from legalism, belonged to the same general movement and is distinguished by the same characteristics. The prophets, like the Law, were subjected to a process of commentary and deduction. Their visions of the future were detached from their historical setting, and were presented according to a fixed scheme. It was by no mere coincidence that the apocalyptic writings had their origin, for the most part, in the same Pharisaic circles in which the Law was elaborated. The Rabbinical method was simply applied to other material, with no essential difference in its spirit and aim.

The earliest examples of apocalyptic come down

[1] *e.g.* by Baldensperjer, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu.*

to us from a period of distress, when the nation and its religion seemed to lie at the mercy of the triumphant powers of heathenism. During the centuries that followed, apocalyptic thought continued to bear the character which had thus been impressed on it from the outset. It is grounded in a profound pessimism which has entirely despaired of the present, and can see no hope for the world except in a reversal of all existing conditions. In accordance with this underlying pessimism, there are certain invariable ideas which the apocalyptic writers all hold in common. (1) They are wholly concerned with the future, which is divided by a great gulf from the present. The first cycle of the world's history is in process of ending, and it cannot end too soon. It has reached the stage of utter exhaustion, and there are no redemptive forces left in it to work out a better future. All that can be hoped for is a fresh beginning—a complete destruction of the old order to make room for the new. (2) It follows that the new order will break in suddenly, and by an act of miracle. At this point, more clearly than elsewhere, we can perceive the difference between the apocalyptic and the prophetic moods of thought. The prophets believe that God is working even now for the better time,—overruling the counsels of wicked men and the calamities and even the sins of His people,—in order to fulfil His purposes. The apocalyptists can see nothing in the present but meaningless evil. They

are content to wait on resignedly through the last convulsive throbs of a dying age, to which another will succeed by a sudden miracle. (3) The change is expected almost at once. So utterly dark are the present conditions that they cannot last much longer; and signs are already manifest that God is about to intervene and execute His judgment. This hope of a speedy fulfilment belongs to the nature of all prophecy, and finds abundant illustration in the Old Testament. But the prophets allow room for a natural development of events. Jeremiah, for instance, assigns to the exile a duration of seventy years, so that it may effect its purpose and prepare the way for a happier age. The apocalyptic writers no longer feel the need of such an interval. Since the transition is to come about by the mere fiat of God, apart from any co-operation of natural causes, it may be looked for at any moment. Nothing is necessary except that God should act at the time which He has appointed; and the writers aim at proving that this time is all but arrived. They point to signs and warnings. They compute the seasons, according to the obscure hints of ancient prophecy, and are satisfied that the end of all things is at hand.

The series of Jewish apocalypses opens, as we have seen, with the Book of Daniel; although in some respects the author of this book is more akin to the

prophets than to the later derivative thinkers. Writing as he does in a time of national struggle and awakening, his message is pregnant with reality. If he fixes his eyes on a visionary future, it is that he may discover, in what will happen hereafter, a solution of the mysteries of the present. By the coming manifestation of His power, God will justify His seeming forgetfulness, and will reveal the hidden purpose which has been working itself out amidst the confusions of human history. The thought of Daniel is indeed less sober and intelligible than that of the prophets; but this is partly due to the very widening of his horizon. He has become conscious, in a manner impossible to the prophets, of the largeness of the scene on which Israel enacts its part. He takes account of God's dealings with many nations through a long tract of time, and tries to reconcile the destiny of the one people with the universal plan. Yet Daniel must be reckoned with the apocalyptic writers rather than with the prophets. Not only does he move in a region of dreams and symbols and calculations, but his thought in its essence is of the apocalyptic type. The calamities which he sees around him have driven him to despair. He thinks of the world that now is as irremediably evil, and looks for a future that will come suddenly and miraculously, through the immediate act of God.

The idea of the coming Kingdom is carried in the Book of Daniel beyond the stage at which it was left

by the prophets. The writer of the book, compelled by the national crisis to survey the history of the past, sees before him a succession of earthly powers which have usurped the sovereignty of God. Of these powers he can distinguish four, the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Macedonian; and conceives them under the figure of beasts that rise up, one after the other, and disappear. He anticipates that the next power will be no other than Israel itself, arising in the likeness of a "Son of man," in contrast to the inferior brutal forms that have preceded it.[1] This advent of Israel will mark the beginning of a reign of God which will endure for ever. Daniel insists only on the fact of a divine sovereignty, to be established hereafter through the agency of Israel. It remained for later writers to fill up the outlines of Daniel's picture, and to build an elaborate theory around his conception of the Kingdom of God.

The actual expression "Kingdom of God," though common in the later Rabbinical writings, is rarely met with in the extant apocalyptic literature. It occurs in the Book of Enoch[2] and the Psalms of Solomon;[3] while in a notable passage of the Assumption of Moses[4] the Kingdom of God is definitely contrasted with the Kingdom of Satan. These, however, are isolated references, only to be discovered

[1] Dn $7^{13.\ 14}$.
[2] En 41 f. 52^{4}.
[3] Pss-Sol 5^{21}.
[4] Ass Mos 10^{1}.

by careful searching; and for the most part the specific idea is replaced by the more general one of a coming age. The world's history is conceived as dividing itself into two great periods—one of which has now almost run its course, while the other is on the point of opening. But this coming age is nothing else than the Kingdom of God. The Old Testament expression has ceased to appeal to the apocalyptic writers, who think in abstract terms where the prophets thought vividly and concretely. They prefer to speak vaguely of a new period, in which the whole order of things will undergo a transformation. Nevertheless, when they ask themselves the reason of this sudden transformation, their answer is the same as that of the prophets. God will assert His sovereignty. He will dispossess all the usurping powers and hold the sole government of the world.

In the apocalyptic books, as in the Old Testament, the new age is ushered in by the "day of Jahveh"; but the day lengthens out into a whole period of birth-throes, leading up to the great transition. It is taken for granted in apocalyptic thought that the better time cannot be established without an interval of dreadful convulsion, alike in nature and in human society. The Flood of Noah was the standing type of the destruction of an evil world, and as such it plays a conspicuous part in the Apocalypses.[1] The

[1] Cf. En 91^{6L}, Jub 23^{14}.

imagery suggested by the Flood is elaborated with the aid of other Old Testament reminiscences, such as the ruin of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, the doom of Sennacherib's army. Not only will the earth be visited with manifold disaster, but the whole framework of the universe will be shaken. Sun and moon will be darkened; stars will be hurled from their places. The present world will be plunged again into chaos in order that the new world may be born. While they thus anticipate a dissolution of all things, the writers dwell particularly on the final agonies of Israel. Ezekiel had already foretold a tremendous crisis through which Israel must pass before the end; and the outline provided by him is filled in with many details.[1] It is assumed that since the cause of God is identical with that of His people, the wickedness of the world will concentrate its strength in a final effort to crush them. The closing scene will take place before Jerusalem. All the powers of heathenism will be united in an assault on the holy city, when God will interpose with a mighty hand and destroy His enemies.[2] The period of woes, in which the old world perishes, is followed, according to the prevailing view, by the Day of Judgment, when the dead are raised up and appear for sentence before God or His representative the Messiah. The Judgment, however, is an integral moment in the whole closing drama; and there is no fixed theory as to

[1] Ezk 38 f. [2] Sib iii. 663, En 56, Es 13^{56}.

the place it occupies.[1] In one classical passage[2] we find the destruction of the world and the Day of Judgment fused together into a single episode. The final woes themselves are the appointed means for the sifting out of men and the establishment of God's faithful people as a new community.

The terrors of the last days are heightened to the utmost in order to enhance the peace and blessedness of the new age that will succeed them. To the prophets of the Old Testament the conception of this bright future was a comparatively simple one. It was to bring the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. His government of His people was to become a reality; and with God as their King they would exercise dominion over the whole earth. The apocalyptic writers are unable to satisfy themselves with this Old Testament anticipation. During the centuries that had intervened the outlook on the future had been greatly modified,—by changed historical conditions, and deeper reflection, and influences from without. The simple conception taken over from the prophets became a complex one; and we have to distinguish in it at least three different elements.

1. The national interest is still predominant; indeed it assumes a more central place than ever.

[1] It comes (1) after the destruction of the world (Sib iii 91); (2) after the general resurrection (Bar 50); (3) after the whole sequence of final events (Es 7^{12}).

[2] En $1^{6f.}$.

Israel had missed the destiny which had been confidently promised, and it had long been apparent that in "this age" there was no prospect of its fulfilment. One foreign domination had only been succeeded by another. Rome had at last arisen as an all-conquering power, and from this most terrible of the heathen empires there was manifestly no hope of rescue. But the longing for deliverance grew all the stronger as the bondage became more desperate. The ancient belief in the ultimate triumph of Israel was not abandoned, but was only projected into the "coming age." This assurance that God will renew the world for the sake of Israel is the inspiring motive of all the Apocalypses. It is never forgotten that He has made a Covenant with His people, and that His cause, under whatever larger aspects it may be regarded, is one with the national cause. The wickedness for which He must punish the heathen is, above all, their oppression of His people, who represent His name on earth. It is true that the reign of God, as contemplated by the apocalytic writers, will extend over all nations; but the place allotted to the Gentiles is at best a secondary one. The community of the future, the free citizens, if we may so express it, of the Kingdom, will be the Jews. The Gentiles will acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and will receive in some measure of His bounty; but they will continue to be aliens. They will have no

right of access to Him except through His chosen people.[1]

2. Although the national idea is paramount, it does not exclude a higher, ethical interest. Indeed it is partly with a genuine desire to solve a great moral problem that the writers insist on the supremacy of Israel in the future age. It could not be doubted that the Jews, however grievously they had sinned, were a righteous people as compared with the heathen who oppressed them. Why, then, had God condemned them to suffer? Why had He subjected them to those who openly denied His law? The question presented itself in a yet acuter form in view of the divisions within the Jewish nation itself. As a result of the struggle for independence the monarchy had been vested in the Asmonæan house; and under the new régime, which grew more and more secular in its character, the stricter religious party found itself disowned and persecuted. It seemed as if God had proved faithless to His servants; but pious minds were unable to rest in this conclusion. They held to the belief that God would yet justify the righteous. He had reserved an inheritance for them in the age to come, although the present age was given over to the wicked. This conception of the future as a reign of righteousness was powerfully reinforced by the individualism which had been

[1] Cf. To 13^{11-16}, En 90^{33}, Pss-Sol 17^{31}, Sib iii. 710–717.

asserting itself in Jewish thought ever since the time of Jeremiah. It was now recognised that men had a claim on God not merely as members of the elect nation, but as individuals. He would know those who had served Him and grant them a place in His Kingdom. He would raise to life again the just and pious of past times, that they also might enjoy the reward which had apparently been denied them. Thus in the doctrine of the coming age, the apocalyptic writers sought a solution of the whole moral problem that had baffled previous thinkers. They maintained, in face of the seeming injustices of the world, that God would yet reveal Himself as the God of righteousness. He would vindicate the righteous nation as against the heathen. He would assure the triumph of His oppressed servants who had remained true to His law. He would show Himself mindful of all who had put their hope in Him, and who seemed at the time to have trusted Him vainly. The present world was under the power of wickedness, but a new world was at hand, in which the righteous would come to their own. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be the nucleus of that holy community of the future; and around them would be gathered prophets and martyrs, raised to life again. All who should stand the test of the final Judgment would have their place assigned to them, with those just men of the past.

3. The national and ethical ideas are combined with others of a purely speculative nature. Ever since the time of the exile, Jewish thought had been brought into contact with the cosmologies of the East, and had latterly been influenced, though to a less degree, by Greek philosophy. The need was increasingly felt of attempting some explanation of the world, and of the riddle of man's life and destiny. In the Old Testament itself the idea of the future Kingdom is blended with larger speculations as to the new order of things which will arise hereafter, when God's will is fulfilled. But these speculations are only a background for the religious conception; while in the apocalyptic books they form an interest by themselves. In their visions of the new age the writers set forth their theories of history and of the processes of creation. They enlarge on the nature and functions of the angels, on the life of the soul after death, on the topography of the invisible world. The conflict which has its issue in the new age is described under categories borrowed from Persian dualism. Two antagonistic principles are supposed to be at warfare in the natural as in the moral world; and in their strife the whole universe is involved. In not a few of its aspects the apocalyptic view of the Kingdom cannot be rightly understood until we take account of the speculative interest which mingles with the religious one. We have to

allow for affinities not only with the teachings of the prophets, but with primitive science and mythology.

The different elements which enter into the conception are not always fused together in the same proportions. Thus in the Psalms of Solomon and the Book of Jubilees the national idea is clearly predominant; in Baruch and 4 Esdras it is allied with the higher ethical idea, and in certain sections of Enoch with transcendental speculations. But we have to do throughout with a composite conception. The writers have gathered suggestions from many different sources, and try to combine them—not always consistently—in their picture of the coming age. A striking example of this endeavour to make room for discordant theories is afforded us in the apocalypses of Baruch and 4 Esdras. The coming age is there divided into two; first, a period of four hundred years, when Israel will enjoy peace and supremacy under the rule of the Messiah; afterwards the final consummation. It can hardly be doubted that the real object of this division is to preserve two views of the Kingdom, side by side with each other. The religious mind was compelled to think of it as the reign of righteousness; but justice had also to be done to the traditional hope of a period of triumph reserved for Israel. These two conceptions could not be wholly reconciled, but they are at least linked together. The restoration foretold

by the prophets is described as a sort of prelude to the true Kingdom of God.

The new age, as conceived by the apocalyptic writers, is to be inaugurated suddenly and by a divine act. Men themselves can do nothing to hasten its coming. They can only wait patiently till the set time is accomplished and God stretches forth His mighty hand. But although men have no power to bring about the Kingdom, they can so act as to ensure for themselves a portion in its blessings. A new community will be formed, to inherit the new age. Its members will be those who are approved by God in the Judgment, and He will set them apart, for enduring fellowship with Himself, when He destroys the present world. The national sentiment which underlies all apocalyptic thought comes to its clearest expression in the account of this new community. It is taken for granted that the Jews, as hitherto, will be God's chosen people; indeed, the great practical object of the Apocalypses is to strengthen them, amidst present troubles, by the thought of their future inheritance. According to one view, all Jews who are living within the bounds of Palestine will be entitled by that very fact to a share in the Kingdom; and although this mechanical view is generally transcended, the national idea is always predominant. God will reserve His Kingdom for

the righteous; but the righteousness He desires is that of the Law. He has Himself given the Law, and will employ it as the one measure whereby He will test the lives of men at the final Judgment. If faith is sometimes emphasised alongside of the Law,[1] we must be careful not to understand it in any but a strictly limited sense. The "faith" which God requires is merely the acceptance of the distinguishing tenets of Judaism, and chiefly of the fundamental belief in the divine unity. No entrance into the Kingdom of any but righteous Jews is ever contemplated. The community of the future will be simply the existing Jewish nation,—purified of its unworthy elements and brought into harmony with its true theocratic ideals.

The blessedness of the future community is pictured in various images,—some of them familiar to us by their reappearance in the New Testament. In the coming age, the conditions of Paradise will be restored, and the tree in the midst of the garden will be no more forbidden.[2] The redeemed will be as the angels of heaven.[3] They will enjoy a perpetual banquet in the society of the Son of Man.[4] They will dwell in an abode of everlasting light.[5] Above all, the blessedness of the new age will consist in abundance of life, which had always appealed to the

[1] Cf. Es 13^{23}, Bar 57^{2}, En 66^{2}.
[2] En 60^{8}, Bar 29, Abr 21, En $32^{3ff.}$.
[3] Dn $7^{15ff.}$, En 104, Bar 51^{10}.
[4] En 62. 42^{5}.
[5] En 22^{2}, Sib iii. 787, En 108^{12}, Pss-Sol 3^{12}.

Hebrew mind as the highest good. The idea of life, as we find it in the Old Testament, includes in itself not only length of days, but joy, prosperity, peace, righteousness,—everything that makes up the full activity of man's nature. God Himself was the Living One, and men attained to the true life according as they knew Him and entered into fellowship with Him. In the higher regions of Old Testament thought, life and communion with God are interchangeable terms. The apocalyptic writers develop the Old Testament idea, and at the same time give it a special direction. They think of life as reserved for the coming age, of which it will constitute the chief blessing. So comprehensively, indeed, are all the future privileges summed up in the word "life," that it is often used as equivalent to the Kingdom itself.[1] The new community will consist of the "living." The present age with its evils and limitations will give place to the condition of "life." Sometimes this condition is further defined as "eternal life," to distinguish it from the unreal and transitory life of the present. It is eternal because it belongs to the eternal age—the enduring order of the future Kingdom.

Little has yet been said of the place assigned to the Messiah in the anticipations of the coming age. This aspect of the subject is so difficult and

[1] Bar 85^{10}, Es 7^{21} 12^{9} 8^{6}, Pss-Sol 14^{2} 15^{3}.

is so intimately bound up with the vital questions of the Gospel history, that it will be necessary to treat it by itself in a separate chapter. It is worth noting, however, that the doctrine of the Kingdom can be presented, in all its main phases, without any reference to the Messianic idea. The Messiah is unthinkable apart from the Kingdom; but the conception of the Kingdom by no means involves that of the Messiah. This will become more evident in the course of the discussion.

CHAPTER II.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

It was an article of Christian belief, almost from the beginning, that the Old Testament Scriptures were inspired throughout by the hope of the Messiah. This belief, which arose naturally out of the primitive apologetic, has passed over into the ordinary theology of the Church; and in one sense, it embodies a profound truth. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He was the fulfilment of the religion of Israel, and through all the earlier history we can trace the unconscious anticipation of His coming. But this larger witness which the Scriptures bear to Jesus is not to be confounded with the specific hope for the Messiah. When we examine the Old Testament according to strict historical methods, we are compelled to assign an altogether secondary place to the Messianic idea. It originated with the prophets, but only assumed its characteristic form in later Judaism.

The fountain-head of Messianic prophecy is to be sought in Nathan's promise to David, as recorded in

the Second Book of Samuel: "I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy house shall be established for ever."[1] Whatever be the origin of this prediction, it expresses the belief, prevalent at the time when the book was written, that the Davidic house was destined to perpetuity. The conviction was strengthened, as time went on, by the apparent stability of the ruling house of Judah, over against the short-lived dynasties of the sister kingdom. It was felt, even by a northern prophet like Hosea, that a peculiar consecration had been vouchsafed to the line of David. The ancient house alone possessed an enduring title to the kingship; and a day would come when it would again assert its sway over the re-united nation.[2]

Originally, therefore, there was little or no religious significance in the sentiment which attached itself to the Davidic dynasty; but a change set in about the time of the conflict with Assyria. The great ethical prophets of that age foretold a period of stress and calamity, which would be followed by a revival of the national life on a new religious basis. They declared that in this future kingdom the authority would be vested, more securely than ever, in the house of David. The glories of David's reign would be restored; and with their extended power the kings

[1] 2 S 7^{12-16}. [2] Hos 3^{5}.

would rule in a new spirit of wisdom and justice. They would stand forth as the representatives of that sovereignty of God which would henceforth be realised on earth. Amos, the earliest of the great prophets, connects the promised age not so much with an individual descendant of David as with the royal house, commencing its history anew under happier auspices. Isaiah and Micah, writing at a somewhat later date, give prominence to the personality of the chosen leader, who would inaugurate the new time. They look forward to a powerful sovereign, in whom David himself will seem to live once more, and under whose just and beneficent reign the land will enjoy an unexampled prosperity. It is evident, however, that the interest of these prophets is centred not on the king, but on the kingdom. They are unable to conceive of a glorious Israel apart from the Davidic house, with which the fortunes of the nation have been so long associated. As they contemplate the Israel of the future, they take for granted that it will still be governed by a son of David, in whom the people will see their own greatness summed up and personified.

The idea of the victorious king who is to preside over the restoration of Israel becomes a constant feature in the writings of the later prophets. His personality, however, tends to fall into the background. Jeremiah is content to speak in a general fashion of "kings sitting on the throne of David."[1] He

[1] Jer 22^4.

anticipates a day when the people "shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king" (*i.e.* the kings of the Davidic house), "who will be raised up unto them."[1] Even in the one outstanding passage where he seems to individualise the king, he regards him as the "Branch" growing up out of the stem of David.[2] The individual person stands for the dynasty in its future consummation. Ezekiel, likewise, thinks rather of the dynasty than of the particular king. He foretells such a united Israel as David had governed before the separation. "I will make them one nation in the land; and David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd."[3] The king is here nothing more than the scion of the dynasty, which is to exercise dominion, as in ancient times, over an undivided kingdom.

With the exile, the historical conditions were completely altered. Although the Jewish people survived, they no longer constituted an independent state, under their native kings; and this change in the outward conditions reflected itself in the hopes now entertained of the future. The fortunes of the community were dissociated from those of the ruling house, which had lost its prerogative, apparently for ever. Israel alone became the object of prophetic thought. The second Isaiah, to take the most signal example, is concerned throughout with the deliverance and exaltation of Israel, yet he nowhere makes an

[1] Jer 30^{9}. [2] Jer $23^{5f.}$. [3] Ezk $37^{21ff.}$.

allusion to the Davidic king. He assumes that God Himself will be King of Israel, and that no earthly sovereign will come between Him and His people. After the return from exile the earlier anticipations underwent a momentary revival, when men of Davidic descent took a foremost part in the work of restoring Jerusalem. Haggai and Zechariah believe that the ancient promises are about to be fulfilled in the person of the kingly Zerubbabel.[1] But with the failure of these enthusiastic hopes, the expectation of deliverance through the house of David seems to have disappeared. In the Book of Malachi it is not a king but a prophet, the returning Elijah, whose appearance is to herald the beginning of the new age.

The hope of the Messianic king is confined, almost solely, to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. It is true that to the early Christian Church the Book of Psalms was the grand repository of Messianic texts; and this view was countenanced, apparently, by the current Jewish theology. Our Lord merely falls back on the common scribal interpretation when He refers the 110th Psalm to the Messiah,[2] and the Psalm in question was one of many which were construed in a similar way. It becomes evident, however, on a critical analysis, that few or none of the so-called Messianic Psalms have any real claim to such a title. Some of them are written in honour of an historical king, who is addressed in the extravagant terms of

[1] Hag 2^{21} f., Zec 6^{11}.

[2] Mk 12^{35}=Mt 22^{42}, Lk 20^{41}.

Oriental homage.[1] Others are descriptive of the ideally righteous man,[2] or of Israel itself in some particular aspect of its struggle or aspiration.[3] So far as any directly Messianic element is traceable, it resolves itself into an anticipation of the enduring supremacy of the house of David.[4] It was no doubt a factor of the first importance in the subsequent development of Messianic theory, that many of the Psalms were commonly regarded as prophecies of the Messiah. But this interpretation was read into them at a later time, and formed no part of their original intention.

When we thus exclude from Messianic prophecy all that is fanciful and extraneous, we find that it recedes within narrow limits. So far from constituting the chief theme of Scripture, it holds a subordinate and almost an accidental place. The dominant conception of the Old Testament writers is that of the Kingdom which is to be established in the latter days. In their thought of this Kingdom they were influenced by the existing historical conditions; and associated the restored Israel with the house of David, which had stood for centuries in the forefront of the national life and seemed to be inseparable from it. But when Jerusalem had fallen and Israel ceased to be governed by its own hereditary kings, the Davidic sovereign gradually disappeared from the vision of the

[1] *e.g.* Pss 2. 45. 72. 110.
[2] Ps 16.
[3] Ps 22.
[4] Cf. Pss 81. 132.

future. It was realised that his part had never been more than secondary. To the prophets who had foretold his coming, he had symbolised the nation; and the hopes which had gathered around him were now transferred to the nation itself. The suppression of the Messianic idea did not involve the loss of anything that was essential in the religion of Israel. We have the feeling, rather, as we read the second Isaiah, that the ancient hopes had only been rendered clearer and more self-consistent. It was now possible to conceive of a future in which God would be King of His people and bring them into a direct communion with Himself.

After the Old Testament period, therefore, the expectation of a Messiah underwent a long eclipse. It belonged to a bygone phase of the national history, and the people instinctively sought for other forms in which to express their ideals and aspirations. At the same time the expectation was kept alive by the very fact that it was enshrined in the Old Testament writings. These had now assumed the character of sacred books, and their teachings were diligently studied and accepted as authoritative. It is probably this continued influence of the Old Testament which accounts for the reappearance of the Messianic idea in a singular group of prophecies now added to the Book of Zechariah (chs. 9–14). The prophecies bear all the marks of late origin, and may have been written about the year 280 B.C. or even a century afterwards.

They describe, in the manner of Ezekiel, how in the latter days the heathen oppressors will mass their forces for an assault upon Jerusalem, and suffer a mighty overthrow, which will prepare the way for the new age. The prophet, in his vision, sees this new age inaugurated by the entrance into the royal city of the promised Messiah, "just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even a colt, the foal of an ass."[1] This portrait of the Messiah as no warrior king but a man of peace, typifying in his person "the quiet in the land," is unique among Old Testament prophecies. Perhaps it may be best explained as an attempt to embody, under an ancient symbol, the religious ideal of a later age. From the prophets before him the writer borrows the conception of the Messiah, but it no longer has a real significance to him as it had to them. He employs it simply as a poetical figure, to express his belief that the true heirs of the future will be the humble and peaceable.

The later development of the Messianic hope has its starting-point in the Book of Daniel (165–164 B.C.), the earliest document of the apocalyptic literature. But although this book was destined to give a new direction to all subsequent Messianic thought, it does not itself contain any mention of the Messiah. The one aim of Daniel is to maintain that Israel, as the holy community, will be supreme in the coming age,

[1] Zec 9^9.

when God asserts His power. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever."[1] But this community of saints to which the Kingdom will be given is personified, in the vision immediately preceding, as "one like unto the Son of man." This human figure rises up before the prophet's eyes in succession to the brute forms which represent the bygone heathen empires. There can be no reasonable doubt that the "Son of man" is symbolical of Israel; but the motives which lie behind the symbolism are by no means easy to determine. Perhaps the lofty idea was present to the writer's mind that Israel, with its purer morality and religion, was the typically human power among the nations of the world. Perhaps the whole vision is based on images and ideas which had been taken over from primitive mythologies. If this be so, the "Son of man" may possibly be the angel Michael, or some other heavenly being who acts as the tutelary genius of Israel. In any case, the figure that appears in Daniel is not the Messiah, but a personification of the holy community which will inherit the Kingdom of God. For this very reason, however, there is a real affinity between the "Son of man" and the Messianic king of Old Testament prophecy; and the identification of them at a later time was not wholly due to a misunderstanding. To the prophets, as we have already seen, the Messiah is not so much an individual person as

[1] Dan 7^{18}; cf. $7^{22.\ 27}$.

the representative of a restored and purified Israel. In the glory of the monarch who revives the ancient traditions of the house of David, the glory of the nation is to find its visible embodiment. Daniel no longer thinks of an earthly king who will lead Israel to victory; but his ultimate idea is similar to that of the prophets. He envisages the community of the future in a symbolical person, through whom God will give effect to His sovereignty.

About the time when the Book of Daniel was written, various influences were working together for a re-awakening of the Messianic hope. In the first place, the Syrian persecution had roused an intense devotion to the ancestral faith; and this devotion had brought with it a quickened interest in the Old Testament Scriptures. The scribes displaced the priests as the religious leaders of the people; and while they encumbered Judaism with much that was trivial and superfluous, they planted it more surely than ever on its scriptural foundations. Among the Old Testament ideas which now came into fresh prominence was that of the Messiah. The historical conditions which had given birth to it were largely forgotten; but the fact stood out that in the prophetic teaching the future of Israel was bound up with the coming of a great king of the house of David. Again, the heroic struggle of the Maccabæan age had not only rekindled the national consciousness, but had secured the inde-

pendence of Israel. A new significance attached itself to not a few of the promises of Scripture. It was not altogether visionary, under the new conditions, to think of Jerusalem as the capital of a mighty state, and of a native king seated on the throne of David and extending his dominion over the world. Once more, the struggle had brought men back to a sense of the value of personalities. It was great individual leaders, raised up by God, who had won liberty for the people; and the conviction gained ground that all deliverance must come in like manner. All through the past, God had wrought out His purposes by means of chosen men. He would work by the same plan when He brought about the great consummation in the latter days. The Kingdom would be His, but there must needs be a man, divinely appointed, who would act as His messenger and instrument. Finally, it was about this time that the transcendental conception of God produced its full effect on Jewish religious thinking. Ever since the Old Testament period, a mistaken reverence had tended to remove God to greater and greater distance. He was the holy and exalted One, who could enter into no direct relation with the actual world, and it became necessary to think of Him as working through intermediaries. The old belief in the one living God was now supplemented by an elaborate doctrine of angels and ministering spirits. To these subordinate agents God was supposed to delegate His authority, and they were

clothed by the popular imagination with semi-divine attributes. The theory of intermediate beings, there can be little doubt, had a considerable share in the revival of the Messianic hope; and it also determined the peculiar form in which the hope now manifested itself. The Messiah ceased to be a mere earthly king, as in the teaching of the prophets, and became a supernatural person, midway between God and man.

It is in the apocalyptic literature that the new speculations on the person and work of the Messiah come prominently before us. The literature extends over a period of about a hundred and fifty years, and the problem of dating the several books is one of extreme difficulty. It is complicated by the fact that each of the books is of composite origin, and the different strata of material have to be carefully distinguished. For our present purposes, however, the questions of date and origin are of minor importance. The composite nature of the documents is itself evidence that in the whole period under discussion certain ideas were current, and that we have to do not so much with a development as with a continuous tradition. Thus the Apocalypses of Baruch and 4 Esdras, although they date from the year 70 A.D., are hardly less instructive than the older writings. They stand for a body of beliefs which had come down through more than a century, practically un-

changed. It is possible that whole chapters now incorporated in them were the work of an earlier time.[1]

One fact requires to be emphasised before we examine the apocalyptic teaching on the subject of the Messiah. To the apocalyptic writers, as to the prophets, the Kingdom of God is the grand interest of the future; and the Messiah only appears incidentally, in connection with the advent of the Kingdom. In the modern investigations of the history of Messianic thought this fact is apt to be unduly neglected. The world of apocalypse is now for the most part dead to us; and if we study the writings it is chiefly for the sake of those stray passages in them which throw light on the Messianic tradition, as it existed in the time of Christ. Such passages appear to stand out amidst the waste of meaningless speculation; and we take for granted that the books were written in order to provide them with a setting and background. But it is quite apparent that to the writers themselves the Messianic idea was of secondary importance. From most of the books it is absent altogether. We meet with it only in the Book of Enoch, the Sibylline Oracles, the Apocalypses of Baruch and Esdras, the Psalms of Solomon, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In these writings it is confined to certain well-marked

[1] This applies more particularly to the Messianic chapters. Cf. the discussion by Vaganay, *Le Problème Eschatologique*, 12 f.

sections;[1] and even in these the references are generally scanty, and have little more than a superficial bearing on the thought as a whole. Indeed, it is only in two portions of apocalyptic literature — the Similitudes of Enoch and the concluding Psalms of Solomon—that the Messiah appears as a really central figure.

The name "Messiah" as the specific designation of a heavenly being who will be manifested in the coming age, occurs for the first time in the earliest section of the Book of Enoch (chs. 83–90). Here, however, we have only a passing reference. No definite function is assigned to God's "Anointed One"; and He does not come into view until the very close of the great final drama. It is in another section of the same book—comprising the so-called "Similitudes of Enoch"—that we first meet with the Messianic idea in anything like a full and intelligible form. This remarkable writing—in some respects our most important document for the history of Messianic thought—seems to have originated at some time between 94 and 64 B.C.,[2] before the Romans appeared on the scene, and while the opposition of the Pharisees to the Asmonæan house was at its height. In his attempt to picture the great future, when the saints

[1] En 36–71, 4 Es 7. 13, Bar 29. 39 f. 70 f., Sib ii. 49, v. 108–110, 414–429, Pss-Sol 17. 18, Tests. of Judah and Levi.

[2] Cf. the discussion by Charles in *The Book of Enoch* and in *Ency. Bibl.* art. "Apocalyptic Literature."

will come to their own, the writer falls back on the Danielic conception of the "Son of man."[1] He adopts it, however, with two essential changes which were fraught with far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, he gives an actual personality to the mysterious figure which in Daniel was only a symbol for the community of Israel. On the other hand, he identifies this heavenly person with the Messiah of ancient prophecy. The Similitudes thus mark one of the turning-points in the history of Messianic speculation. From this time onward we find the idea of a Davidic king merging in that of a supernatural being, who will descend from heaven to enact his part in the final scenes.

At the time when the Similitudes were written, this transformation of the Messiah had become a necessity. God had now been removed to an infinite distance from the world; and if He was to interpose at last in human history, some intermediary had to be provided. Such a Messiah as had been contemplated by the prophets was manifestly insufficient; but he was now clothed in the attributes of the Son of man in Daniel. As "one like unto the Son of man" he was in some sense man, capable of entering into relations with the human race. Yet he was not man, but only bore a likeness to man. He belonged to the heavenly world and was the immediate creation

[1] That the conception is taken from Daniel seems evident from the language used in chap. $46^{1ff.}$.

of God. He was so high in dignity that God could act through him directly, and employ him as his assessor in the realisation of the Kingdom. It is this supernatural side of the Messiah's character on which almost the sole emphasis is laid in the Similitudes. The Son of man has existed from the beginning, hidden in the secret places of heaven. In the last days he will come forth from his concealment as the representative of God. He will take his seat on the throne of his glory, and all dominion and power will be bestowed on him. He will put an end to all evil and give the wicked over to destruction. The true servants of God he will establish in prosperity on a transformed earth, and will himself abide with them in joyful communion for ever. To the writer of the Similitudes the Messiah is, above all else, the Judge of the world. As Judge he possesses an unerring wisdom, and has power to lay bare all hidden things. He is absolutely righteous, and the one purpose of his Judgment is to vindicate the righteous and avenge them on their oppressors. The authority entrusted to him by God is without limit. He is surrounded by the hosts of angels, and all kings and nations are compelled to appear before his throne and to accept his sentence. But while the dignity of the Son of man is thus magnified, we are made to realise throughout that he has no independent place or function. All the attributes with which he is endued are conferred on him by God. Whatever he does is

done in the name of God and by his power. He is simply the organ of God, who is himself unapproachable, and requires an intermediary in order to execute his will.

The conception of the Messiah which we find in the Book of Enoch is normative also for the Apocalypses of Baruch and Esdras. Here also he appears as a supernatural being, who has existed from all time, and who comes with the clouds of heaven as God's agent and representative.[1] But in these later writings the traditional character of the Messiah as the champion of Israel more distinctly asserts itself. The work assigned to him is that of destroying the hostile powers and bringing deliverance to God's chosen people. After his victory he sets up a kingdom, but this is not yet the final Kingdom of God. He will reign in Palestine over a restored Israel, and will dispense every imaginable blessing. But his reign will be of limited duration.[2] At the end of four hundred years he will either return in glory to heaven,[3] or will die, along with all those who have shared his triumph.[4] Then, after seven days' silence, a new world will arise, the earth will give up its dead, God will sit on His throne and judge all men according to their works. In this second æon the Messiah passes entirely out of sight. The picture set before us in the two Apocalypses is

[1] Es 13^{26} 14^{9} 12^{32}, Bar 30.
[2] Es 7^{29}, Bar 30. 40.
[3] Bar 30.
[4] Es 7^{29}.

highly significant, showing as it does that the Messianic idea, under all its modifications, continued to be closely associated with the national hope. In Baruch and Esdras, more than in any other writings preserved to us, the purely Jewish outlook is transcended. A distinction is drawn between the true Kingdom of God and the mere national consummation,—which has a place allowed to it, but only as a sort of interlude. The activity of the Messiah, however, begins and ends with this intermediate kingdom. He brings to fulfilment the patriotic hopes of Israel, but has no relation to the ultimate Kingdom of God.

The national character of the Messianic idea is seen, even more clearly, in the Psalms of Solomon, written after Pompey had entered Jerusalem, and brought Judæa for the first time under the suzerainty of Rome. The author of the Psalms is a Pharisee, holding the Pharisaic belief that Israel is a theocracy, and that the Asmonæan monarchy has been a usurpation of the divine rights. Yet the Roman interference has roused him to a mood of patriotic indignation. His heart is set on an independent Jewish kingdom, although he still maintains his antagonism to the Asmonæans by whom such a kingdom had apparently been realised. It is in this conflict of feeling that he falls back on the Messianic hope. By means of it he is able to conjure up the vision of a glorious kingdom of Israel

which shall be at the same time a true theocracy. It will be ruled by no earthly monarch, but by the Messiah himself whom God will send for the deliverance and exaltation of His people. The two closing Psalms are devoted entirely to a glowing description of the blessed reign of the Messiah. Although inheriting the throne as Son of David,[1] he will be chosen by God and will rule in His name and authority.[2] God Himself is the eternal King of Israel,[3] and the Messiah is a vice-regent, not the supreme sovereign. There is no suggestion of his supernatural birth or pre-existence, and he appears throughout as a divinely-appointed *man*. Yet the Psalmist seems to regard him as something more than human. He conquers without earthly weapons;[4] he smites the earth with the mere breath of his mouth;[5] he is pure from sin, all-wise and all-powerful.[6] His peculiar vocation is to destroy the dominion of the Gentiles, and to set up in its stead a kingdom of Israel, which he will govern in perfect accordance with the will of God.[7] For this vocation he will be qualified, above all, by the attributes of ethical majesty. His power will be founded on holiness, justice, and wisdom. He will set his hope solely upon God and will tolerate the presence of no iniquity. As his kingdom will be one of righteousness, so all its individual members will be holy—all

[1] 17^{23}. [2] $17^{23.\ 47}$ 18^{8}. [3] 17^{49}. [4] 17^{35}.
[5] 17^{37}. [6] $17^{38.\ 39.\ 40}$. [7] $17^{23f.}$ 28^{44}.

of them "sons of their God."[1] Thus in the Psalms of Solomon we have a conception of the Messiah which seems to lie midway between that of the prophets and that of the apocalyptists. The promised Deliverer will be a king on the throne of David, but his kingship will be of another type than any ever seen on earth. Nothing is more impressive in the picture than the emphasis laid on the moral ascendency of the Messiah; but it is necessary to observe that the purely ethical interest is subordinate to the national one, and more particularly to the Pharisaic programme. The hope of the Psalmist is not so much for a reign of righteousness as for the predominance of Israel, in its character of the nation of the Law. To the Pharisaic party of which he is the spokesman the Law was the one true organ of the divine government; but he feels that this ideal is too lofty and abstract to satisfy the aspirations of the multitude. They desired a king to lead them to their high destiny; and he counsels them to fix their hope not on the usurping Asmonæan kings, but on the Lord's own Messiah. This future monarch would at once be the personal chief of Israel, and the embodiment of the Law.

In the remaining apocalyptic writings the Messiah only appears as a passing figure. The Sibylline Oracles allude to him as a holy king who will

[1] $17^{30.\ 36}$.

wield the sceptre over the whole earth.[1] He comes from heaven endued with divine power, and restores to Israel all that had been lost—making Jerusalem a splendid city and the capital of the nations. A more striking anticipation is that which meets us in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[2] The Messiah is there represented as a royal priest, clothed with the spirit of holiness. He dwells in heaven with God, and will be revealed in the last times. His office is that of judgment; but the judgment which he exercises will be of an inward, spiritual nature. He will destroy not outward enemies, but invisible powers of wickedness. In the days of his priesthood sin will pass away, and he will make his saints partakers with him of the tree of life. The blessing of God will descend upon Israel, and the earth will enjoy a lasting peace.

When we survey the later Jewish literature as a whole, we are left with the impression that two ideas, in their nature incompatible, have been blended in the conception of the Messiah. On the one hand, there is the Old Testament hope of a prince descended from David, who is to restore the fortunes of Israel and introduce an age of peace and blessedness. On the other hand, there is the apocalyptic vision, derived from Daniel, of a purely angelic being, who will come with the clouds of heaven, and act as the assessor of

[1] Sib iii. 49. [2] Levi 2. 18, Juda 24 f.

God in the final consummation. These two ideas, so different in their nature and origin, tended to coalesce because of the strong national feeling which made the deliverance of Israel the chief interest of the coming age. It was taken for granted that the community of the future would be the Jewish nation, or at least its godly remnant. The foremost actor, therefore, in the events of the great future, must bear a special relation to Israel. Though an angelic power, capable of mediating between God and the world, he must yet in some sort be the Messianic king, promised to the chosen people. It was impossible to unite the two conceptions in anything like a harmonious picture; and we need not try to construct such a picture from the apocalyptic accounts of the Messiah. He appears in different books as a warrior king,[1] a prince of peace,[2] a champion of justice and holiness,[3] a great high priest,[4] a transcendental ruler of the world.[5] Each thinker feels himself free to imagine his own ideal of the representative of God in the future age. As his nature is variously conceived, so is his function. Sometimes he wages battle with earthly antagonists, sometimes with the powers of sin and Satan. His sphere of activity is now Palestine, now the whole earth, now the invisible world. The Messianic idea as we find it in the later literature is essentially vague and plastic, and can

[1] Es 13. [2] Bar 29. 74, Sib v. 4. 14. [3] Pss-Sol 17.
[4] Levi 18. [5] Simils. of En.

adapt itself, for this reason, to all the changing modes of Jewish religious thought.

There are several features, however, which are common to all the presentations of the Messiah during the whole apocalyptic period. (1) In the first place, he manifests himself unexpectedly, when the need of the world is greatest. The writers are all at variance as to the time of his coming. It will be at the beginning of the final conflict,[1] or during the last assault on Jerusalem,[2] or just before the founding of the new community.[3] But in any case it will be abrupt and unlooked for. The Messiah has always existed, but he is kept in concealment by God that He may appear suddenly at the appointed time. (2) Again, the peculiar task of the Messiah is that of executing judgment. The world lies in wickedness, and before the new age can open there must be a sifting out of God's people. The Messiah is the presiding figure at the judgment, which takes the form sometimes of an ordeal of war,[4] sometimes of a forensic act.[5] But however it is effected, it has for its purpose the destruction of sinners and the vindication of the righteous. (3) The Messiah, who is judge of all, is protector of the righteous; and they are identified, in the first instance, with the oppressed people of Israel. He gathers to himself

[1] Sib v. 414, Es 12, Bar 36–40.
[2] Es 13, Sib iii. 652.
[3] En 90.
[4] Pss-Sol., Sib., Es., Bar.
[5] Simils. of En.

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the faithful Jews in Palestine, re-unites them with the scattered tribes, and rules over them in wisdom and righteousness.[1] All sin is banished from the world during his blessed reign, and he is enthroned as a holy king over a holy community.[2] (4) He not only delivers Israel, but exalts it to a pre-eminence among the nations. Sometimes it is assumed that he will simply destroy the heathen; but elsewhere he is conceived as governing them, through the instrumentality of Israel. The suggestions of a possible redemption of the heathen are meagre and uncertain;[3] and the cherished dream of the apocalyptists is that of a dominion of Israel over its former oppressors. With the reign of the Messiah this dream will be more than realised.

It is everywhere characteristic of the view set forth in the Apocalypses, that the Messiah acts solely as the representative of God. God has chosen him, gives him his equipment for his vocation, instructs and supports him, accompanies his work with manifestations of power.[4] He, on his part, looks wholly to the honour of God in all that he accomplishes. He judges in the name of God, establishes the law of God by his righteous rule, builds up a community for God's service and glory. The real King is always God Himself, and the Messiah has no independent or personal significance.

[1] Pss-Sol 17, Es 13^{26}, Levi 18.
[2] En 39. 45^{4} 62^{14} 71^{16}.
[3] Levi 18, Es 13^{26}.
[4] Pss-Sol 17, En 48, Es 13.

When he has enacted his part in the inauguration of the new age, he effaces himself altogether and leaves the kingdom to God.

Thus far we have considered the Messianic hope as it is reflected in the literature which has come down to us from the period between the Old and New Testaments. A difficult question arises when we try to determine how far this literature was in harmony with the popular expectations. Our available documents, it must always be remembered, were the product of a learned, and in many respects, artificial Judaism. Moreover, they originated for the most part in Pharisaic circles, opposed to the political ideals which were commonly diffused among the people. The Pharisees hoped for a restoration of Israel by some miraculous agency, apart from the co-operation of man. They dreamed of a pure theocracy in which the absolute reign of the Law would leave no room for any earthly king. To the mass of the people these ideas were alien or unintelligible. The popular mind was aware of no contradiction between the pure theocratic belief and the hope of a Jewish kingdom, constituted and governed like the Israel of ancient times.

We have to reckon, therefore, with the possibility that right on from Old Testament, or at least from Maccabæan times, there existed a popular tradition in which the Messianic element was far more pro-

nounced than we might gather from the formal writings. Of such a tradition we seem to have evidence in the Psalms of Solomon. The writer, as we have seen, is a Pharisee, who is anxious to enlist the popular sympathy on behalf of the Pharisaic programme; and in order to achieve his object he can think of no surer method than to bring forward the Messianic hope. He feels that here, at any rate, he is on common ground with the people. They will understand the aim of his party and embrace it with enthusiasm when it is presented to them under the cherished imagery of the reign of the Messiah. This indirect evidence afforded by the Psalms of Solomon is borne out by the express words of Philo, in a passage which evidently reflects the prevailing Jewish belief of his time. "According to the prophets a man will appear who wages war and conquers powerful nations, while God sends the needed help to his saints."[1] Above all, we have an unmistakable testimony in the numerous popular tumults, half-religious and half-political, which took place in the time of the Roman procurators. These outbreaks of revolutionary Judaism seem all to have been inspired by Messianic expectations. "What most incited the people to war," says Josephus, "was an ambiguous oracle contained in their sacred writings, that at that time one who proceeded from their country should become ruler of the world."[2]

[1] *De præm. et poenis*, 16. [2] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* 6. 5.

Our chief authority for the state of popular feeling in the time of Christ is the New Testament itself. We can gather from every page of the Gospels that the period was one of intense excitement. The religious leaders found it almost impossible to restrain the ardour of the people, who were waiting everywhere for the appearance of the promised Deliverer. This mood of expectancy had no doubt been heightened by the events of recent history. For more than a generation past the Romans had been encroaching on Jewish freedom, and their measures of repression had stirred the spirit of patriotism to fiercer life. The dream of a miraculous deliverance and of a Messianic king who would effect it, assumed a new meaning in that critical time; but in itself it was nothing new. Behind the ferment of which we have evidence in the Gospels, we can discern a long period of growing anticipation.

What was the nature of this Messianic hope which was cherished by the multitude? We can infer from the allusions in Philo and Josephus that it attached itself more immediately to Old Testament prophecy. To the people at large the Messiah remained what he had been to Isaiah and his contemporaries—the Son of David who would bring victory and prosperity to the Jewish nation. In the light of the Gospel references it can hardly be doubted that the popular conception of the Messiah was mainly national and political. This, however, by no means implied that

it was unaffected by the apocalyptic speculations. How far the apocalyptic writings were current among the people it is impossible to say; but we know that at least the Book of Daniel was widely read. The current ideas of the approaching consummation had been largely moulded by it; and we shall find reason to believe that its peculiar conception of the Son of man was generally understood in a Messianic sense. It may be concluded that in the popular tradition, as in the literature, the national and apocalyptic elements of the Messianic hope were blended. The people would naturally apprehend the hope on its political side; but they were conscious that it had another aspect, which they willingly recognised as legitimate.

We may fairly presume that in the expectations of the multitude, much more than in the literature, the figure of the Messiah occupied a conspicuous place. Where the writers thought of the future in abstract terms, the people would fix their minds on the definite personality who was to represent the coming age. Yet the predominant conception, even in the popular Messianic hope, was that of the Kingdom. The Messiah was an object of longing only in so far as he was the necessary instrument of the great consummation. "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"[1] "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that

[1] Ac 1^{6}.

cometh in the name of the Lord."[1] In expressions like these we can discern the underlying thought which gave meaning to the cherished visions of the Messiah.

[1] Mk 11^{10}.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The work of Jesus, according to the testimony of all the evangelists, was intimately related to that of John the Baptist. It was recognised that the later movement, fraught though it was with infinitely higher issues, was in some manner the sequel and outcome of the earlier one, and could not be understood apart from it. The advent of the prophet in the wilderness had been "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ."[1]

It is necessary to remind ourselves that the New Testament account of John is determined throughout by this estimate of his significance. Our evangelists are concerned solely with the life of Jesus; and in their preliminary narrative of the ministry of John they attempt no more than to link the earlier events with the greater events which were to follow. We may infer, therefore, that they regard the Baptist from one particular point of view, and in such a fashion as to do him at once more and less than

[1] Mk 1^1.

justice. On the one hand, his affinities with Jesus are unduly emphasised. His work is set before us as the direct and conscious preparation for the gospel. He is described as watching for Jesus, as acknowledging Him by a divine intuition in the moment of His baptism, as delivering a message which was like an anticipation of that of Jesus Himself. It was only natural that as time went on and the reminiscence of the actual history became fainter, the prophet should be brought into ever closer relation to the Messiah whom he foretold. His work was all assimilated to the one element in it which was of supreme interest to after times. Thus in the Fourth Gospel all other features of John's activity fall out of sight, and he appears only in his most exalted capacity as the man sent from God to bear witness to the Light. In the earlier Gospels this exaggerated view of his connection with Jesus is already foreshadowed, and is especially traceable in Luke's account of the two nativities. On the other hand, while thus magnifying his place in Christian history, the evangelists have almost certainly done less than justice to John the Baptist. In their eagerness to associate him with Jesus, they have treated his own ministry as a passing episode. They only introduce him at one or two moments in his career, and present his teaching in a meagre outline, without comment or explanation. We are left with the impression on

our minds that his work had no separate value or result, and was merged, almost immediately, in the work of his Successor.

It is impossible to rest satisfied with this conclusion that John was nothing but a voice in the wilderness, announcing the approach of the Messiah. From various indications in the New Testament itself we can see that he was an independent teacher, with a message and an influence of his own. When he was thrown into prison, his disciples continued his work, apparently unconscious that it had now been superseded by the ministry of Jesus. Long after his death we find traces of a community which looked back upon him as its founder;[1] and the Fourth Gospel itself is probably to be interpreted, at least in one of its aspects, as a polemic against the Baptist sect, which had maintained its separate vitality alongside of the Christian Church. It seems indubitable that John produced a much deeper and more lasting impression than our Gospel records suggest; and that there were elements in his teaching of which they tell us little. They deal with him simply as a figure in Christian history, while he had another and perhaps a more characteristic place.

To understand the true relation of John to Jesus we require, in the first instance, to consider him by himself—forgetting, as far as possible, those

[1] Ac 18^{25} 19^{3}.

great events to which his ministry was the prelude. Our only materials—apart from a short passage in Josephus which is now generally admitted to be authentic[1]—are supplied by the Gospel writers; but from a careful analysis of their notices of John, scanty as they are and influenced by later reflection, we can make out at least something of his historical character.

According to Matthew's narrative the preaching of John was summed up in the words, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2] In the parallel accounts of Mark and Luke these words are not reported in their literal form. We find, in place of them, the general statement, "John came baptizing in the wilderness, and proclaiming the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins."[3] But the further narrative of these two evangelists makes it clear that they also regarded John as the herald of the Kingdom. He proclaimed that the great consummation was close at hand; he called on men to undergo his baptism, in view of the imminent crisis. These are the two unquestionable facts from which we must take our departure in any attempt to understand the work of John.

It has been well established, in the light of modern research, that John was by no means the originator of the rite of baptism, which has its counterparts

[1] Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 5. 2. [2] Mt 3^2. [3] Mk 1^4=Lk 3^3.

in the Greek mysteries, in the religions of India, Persia, Egypt, Asia Minor. The washing of the body with running water expressed by a natural symbolism that cleansing from inward defilement without which there could be no access to the divine presence. Judaism itself affords several analogies to the rite of baptism. We need only instance the lustrations demanded by the Mosaic law, the ceremonial washings of the Essenes, the purification by water which was part of the ritual employed in the admission of proselytes.[1] Precedents like these may have had their influence on John; but when we remember the close connection between his baptism and his message of the Kingdom, we may discern a more definite motive in his adoption of the rite. Among the Old Testament prophecies which tell of the coming of the new age, none plays a more remarkable part in the Gospel history than the latter section of Zechariah. It suggested to Jesus the entry into Jerusalem by which He publicly asserted His Messiahship;[2] and allusions to it meet us continually in the course of the narrative.[3] There is reason to believe that it was held in peculiar reverence by those who cherished the apocalyptic hope. They pondered its mysterious utterances, and sought by means of it to forecast the signs and spell out the date and manner of the future deliverance.

[1] Cf. Lambert, *The Sacraments of the New Testament*, 55 f.

[2] Zec 9^9 = Mt $21^{4.5}$.

[3] Zec $9^{9.10}$ 10^2 $11^{12.13}$ 12^{10} 13^6 13^7 14^{21}.

John was no doubt familiar with this prophetic writing; and when he set himself to declare the near approach of the Kingdom, he may well have had recourse to its symbolism like Jesus after him. "In that day," the prophet had written, "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."[1] John may have felt himself appointed to give effect to this prophecy. He "proclaimed the baptism for the remission of sins,"—announced to his countrymen that the fountain of cleansing, which had been foretold in the well-known Scripture, was now opened.

It is more than probable that John ascribed a real validity to his baptism, apart from its symbolic meaning.[2] He undoubtedly sought, in the first instance, to effect a moral change, and only administered the rite to those who professed repentance; yet the inward process required to be completed and sealed by the visible rite. When baptism meets us later in the New Testament as an ordinance of the Christian Church, we find even Paul describing it as a mystery, by which the Spirit is, in some actual sense, imparted. He assumes that this view is shared, in still larger measure, by those whom he addresses; and it

[1] Zec 13^1.

[2] For a discussion of this point see Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*, 529, and *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, 283.

probably had attached itself to the rite from the beginning. Ancient religion made little attempt to discriminate between a symbol and its spiritual content. Just as the spoken word was vaguely identified with the person or thing that it designated, so the outward sign was confused with the reality, and was supposed to carry with it a religious worth and power. That a value of this nature was generally attributed to John's baptism may be inferred from the question with which Jesus, at a later day, silenced the priests and elders: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?"[1] The question, it will be observed, refers to the baptism, not merely to the religious teaching, of John. It would have been meaningless if John had claimed to be nothing more than a preacher of righteousness, enforcing by symbol what he had taught in words. But he had offered his baptism as an actual means of obtaining a certain grace from God; and hence a controversy had arisen as to his sanction and authority. What was the guarantee that he had indeed acted in the name of God and that his baptism was possessed of a real efficacy?

It was in view of the near approach of the Kingdom that John summoned the people to his baptism. The new age as foreshadowed in the Scriptures and Apocalypses, was to be preceded by a time of judgment, in which the elect community would

[1] Mk 11^{30} = Mt 21^{25}.

be sifted out from the general mass of wickedness. John declared that this preliminary act of the great drama was about to open, and that only a short interval remained in which men might assure for themselves a place in the coming Kingdom. By their repentance, sealed and attested in the rite of baptism, they could even now obtain a "remission of sins," and so pass unscathed through the hour of trial. John did not, indeed, claim an absolute sufficiency for his baptism. It was only an anticipation of that baptism with the Spirit which the Messiah Himself would bestow, when He came to execute the judgment. But those who submitted to the earthly rite were marked out already as God's people. They could look forward with confidence to that higher baptism which would confirm them in their inheritance of the Kingdom.

The fundamental ideas of John's mission may thus be gathered, in a general manner, from the symbolic rite which is associated with his name. He declared that the Kingdom of God was near, and that only the righteous could hope to possess it. He warned his countrymen to avail themselves of the short interval before the crisis, and to repent of the sins which would otherwise bring them to condemnation. He came forward in his own person as a messenger of God to whom the task was committed of receiving repentance and marking it by an outward seal. But

to apprehend more definitely the nature of John's mission, we must turn to the record of his teaching which is preserved to us in the Gospels. With the help of this record, and of the subsequent allusions to his person and work, we are able to set him in something like his true relation to the contemporary life of Judaism. It may be well to separate the various aspects in which he appears before us, and to consider his attitude (*a*) to apocalyptic theory; (*b*) to the popular Messianic movement; (*c*) to the official religion; (*d*) to the teaching of the prophets.

(*a*) In his view of the coming age, John seems to have followed the traditional lines of apocalyptic speculation. He looked for a time of wrath in which the present order of the world would be destroyed; for a judgment of the righteous and the wicked; for a Messiah who would be invested with divine powers. The peculiar work of John, according to some modern scholars,[1] was to bring into general currency these apocalyptic ideas. They had been confined hitherto to a small literary class and had practically no influence on the religious thought of the masses; but John informed them with life and set them forth in words of glowing eloquence. As a result of his preaching the whole nation took up the hope of the Kingdom of God. But we have no ground for thus assuming that the hope was an

[1] *e.g.* Titius, *Jesu Lehre vom Reiche Gottes.*

esoteric one, which required to be popularised. The apocalyptic books themselves may not have been widely read, but the broad ideas they dealt with had long been common property, and had become blended with the purely national expectation. We can find nothing to indicate that the views of John concerning the future were in any way strange or novel to the multitude. It may rather be inferred, from the very excitement which he created, that he had an audience in full sympathy with him. He appealed to hopes and fears with which all had been familiar from their childhood, and could be sure of a response when he declared that they would presently be realised.

If John did little to popularise the apocalyptic beliefs, he probably did even less to modify them or turn them into new channels. The view has recently been maintained that he effected some all-important change, the precise nature of which can no longer be determined, in the current expectations. His chief significance, according to this view, was that of an apocalyptic innovator.[1] But in the New Testament record of his teaching there is no evidence of any attempt to change the character of the traditional hope. He took over the conceptions of the Kingdom, the Judgment, the office of the Messiah, as he found them; and so far from adding new features to the ordinary picture of the last days, he aimed at presenting it in its simplest form, without any elaboration

[1] Cf. Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, ch. xix.

of details. We may doubt, indeed, whether he was fully conversant with apocalyptic doctrine, or had much interest in it for its own sake. He does not appear to have asked himself any of those questions concerning the nature of the Kingdom which were primary with the apocalyptic writers. His interest in the future was not dogmatic or speculative, but practical. Assured that the great crisis was imminent, he desired to make men ready for it, awakening them to the repentance which would enable them to stand in the coming Judgment.

The characteristic element in the work of John is not to be found, therefore, in the ideas he held regarding the future. His teaching no doubt revolved around the hope of the Kingdom, and gave it a fresh meaning and a more intense reality in the minds of the people. But we misrepresent the nature of his message when we try to interpret solely from the apocalyptic side. He was occupied not so much with the Kingdom itself as with the preparation for it. While he shared in the visionary beliefs which were prevalent in the Jewish world of his time, he sought to employ them as the motive and the dynamic for a practical religious appeal.

(*b*) We have next to consider the work of John in its relation to the national and political phase of the common hope. The future age had always been associated with the restoration of Israel. In even

the most catholic of the apocalyptic writers the national idea can be clearly traced; and we cannot doubt that among the people generally it stood in the foreground. More than ever since the encroachments of Rome had put an end to Jewish independence, the patriotic hope had become all in all. Movements were already on foot, and were to grow in force during the next generation, which employed the old religious watchwords in the service of a political propaganda. Are we to think of the mission of John as in any way connected with those merely national movements?

It has been conjectured from the enthusiasm which John excited among the populace, that his aim was patriotic as well as moral and religious. Multitudes gathered about him in his lifetime; even after his death his memory was revered as that of a popular hero, and the religious leaders knew that they would incur danger by saying anything to his disparagement.[1] There seems to be nothing in his recorded message to account for this enthusiasm; and we can hardly avoid the suspicion that the people saw in him something else than a preacher of righteousness, who bitterly upbraided them and warned them to flee from the wrath to come. They identified him, in some manner, with the hopes that lay deepest in their life as a nation. They welcomed him as the herald of that deliverance which they were waiting

[1] Mt 21^{26}.

and longing for. This conclusion seems to be further supported by the circumstances of his imprisonment and death. We have the testimony of Josephus that Herod threw him into prison "lest his influence with the multitude might lead to some revolt"; and this, it is more than probable, was Herod's true motive, although he may also have had personal reasons for silencing the bold preacher. Some weight may also be allowed to the first chapter of Luke, reflecting, as it appears to do, the sentiments and traditions of the early Palestinian community. The song which is ascribed to Zacharias gives utterance to a semi-political view of the coming age. God is shortly to restore the dynasty of David, to effect the deliverance of Israel from its oppressors, and to bring in the reign of righteousness. John is celebrated as the forerunner of the new time; and this conception of him can hardly have arisen unless there was something in his actual mission which seemed to encourage it. We seem to hear in the song an echo of those popular rumours which gathered around him in his own lifetime.

It is indeed more than probable that the effect of John's appearance was to add fresh vigour to the revolutionary movement. The people were chafing under the foreign yoke, and were eagerly watching for some unusual event which should be the signal for their deliverance. A religious ferment at such a time inevitably allied itself with patriotic enthusiasm. When we remember how even the

message of Jesus was construed in a political sense, we can easily believe that Zealots and agitators would welcome John as a kindred spirit with themselves. His appeal, like their own, was to excited crowds. His strange dress and demeanour, his vehement speech and prophecies of impending doom, were all in keeping with the mood of fanaticism and revolt. None the less, we may regard it as practically certain that John himself had no sympathy with the political aims imputed to him. He looked for a kingdom which would break in suddenly, apart from human co-operation. He declared emphatically that descent from Abraham would be of no avail in the coming Judgment. He exhorted those who sought his counsel to abide quietly in their vocations, and thus impressed upon them that no violent action was necessary on their part to bring in the Kingdom of God. It is especially noteworthy that he offered this counsel even to the publicans. A political agitator would certainly have denounced them and compelled them to abandon their calling as agents of the Roman tyranny; but John dealt with them as with the others. He laid on them no requirement except the plain moral one, "that they should exact no more than what was appointed them."

To a certain extent, no doubt, John shared in the national expectations; and we must be careful not to infer too much from those passages in his teaching which seem to transcend them altogether. He was

a Jew, and remained, so far as we can judge, within the limits prescribed for him by Jewish tradition. He took for granted that the community of the future would be the restored Israel, and that its members would be pious Israelites. His allusion to the "children of Abraham" does not imply that Jewish descent is of no value, but merely that it must be supplemented by moral worthiness before it can be a passport into the Kingdom. It is not suggested—and the thought was wholly beyond John's horizon—that the Kingdom would be opened to all men, irrespective of race. But the limitation of outlook, only to be overcome in Christianity, did not affect the main purport of John's message. Assuming though he did that Israel was heir to the Kingdom, he insisted that only the righteous would be counted as the true Israel. The Judgment would be one in which every man must answer for himself and have his place assigned to him according to the worth of his life. In its essence, therefore, the teaching of John was a protest against the exclusive ideas which underlay the political agitation of the time. He declared that God would judge men by the moral law and by that alone. It was not Israel as a nation but the cause of righteousness that would have its triumph in the coming Kingdom.

(*c*) A more difficult question arises when we seek to determine John's attitude to the official religion.

The references in the Gospels might lead us to suppose that John, like his Successor, was in open conflict with the scribes and Pharisees; but here, as elsewhere in the record, we seem to detect the influence of later theory. It is noticeable that Matthew and Luke are at variance with regard to the fierce invective, "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"[1] According to Luke, it was addressed to the whole multitude, while Matthew gives it a particular reference to the Pharisees and Sadducees. Of the two reports, that of Luke may be accepted with little hesitation as the more trustworthy. The words in question evidently form part of the general appeal by which John sought to rouse his hearers to a sense of their need for his baptism. Like the Old Testament prophets whom he took as his models, he began with a stern denunciation in order to enforce the demand for a true repentance. The strength of the appeal is lost when its vehement introductory words are detached from the discourse as a whole, and referred to one small section of the audience. We can hardly be wrong in explaining the version of Matthew from the Jewish predilections with which his Gospel was written. He will not believe that a rebuke so scathing was addressed to the whole chosen people, and limits it to the official classes, who misrepresented the true Israel. That

[1] Mt 3^7=Lk 3^7.

these classes stood aloof from John and regarded him with suspicion is indeed probable. They can have had little sympathy with a movement which was popular in its origin and calculated to awaken a Messianic excitement. With their absorption, too, in legal and ceremonial conceptions of righteousness, they were unable to respond to John's call for a moral repentance. The statement of Luke that they refused the proffered baptism[1] need not be doubted; it is fully borne out by the question put by Jesus to the "priests and elders" concerning their estimate of John.[2] Nevertheless there are no traces of anything like a conflict between John and the official religion. The terms of eulogy in which he is mentioned by the Pharisee Josephus would rather seem to indicate that the popular judgment was finally endorsed by the religious leaders; and Justin, writing in the second century, includes the Baptist community among the orthodox Jewish sects.[3] Such a recognition would certainly never have been granted if the founder of the community had been notoriously hostile to the accredited representatives of the Law. The conclusions to which we are led by these fragments of later evidence are supported by indications in the Gospel narratives themselves. In one remarkable passage "the disciples of John and of the Pharisees" are classed together as observing many fasts.[4] From this it

[1] Lk $7^{29.\ 30}$.
[2] Mt $21^{26f.}$.
[3] Justin, *Trypho*, 80.
[4] Lk 5^{33}.

would appear that John was in some measure allied with the Pharisees, or at any rate acquiesced in the general scheme of the religious life laid down by them. The passage stands by way of introduction to the saying of Jesus about the need of pouring new wine into new bottles. His message is thus contrasted, not only with the teaching of the Pharisees, but with that of John. It was a new message, free from the outworn traditions of Judaism, and was incompatible with the ancient ritual to which his predecessor was still bound. But apart from this acceptance of the religious customs of the Pharisees, John seems to have been at one with them in their characteristic attitude towards the Kingdom. He believed, like them, that God would presently interpose with His own mighty act, and that nothing was required of men but to wait passively on the Divine will. Even as a herald of the Kingdom his affinities were not with the Zealots, whom he seemed superficially to resemble, but with the Pharisees.

That there was no real antagonism between John and the orthodox religion is evident from the very fact that he was left unmolested. If the religious authorities had suspected danger or innovation in his preaching, they would have taken measures to suppress him; but they were content to stand neutral, and had manifestly no part in the subsequent action of Herod. Jesus, on the contrary, had hardly begun His mission when the enmity of the official leaders

was directed against Him. They felt instinctively that He had initiated a new movement, which was alien in its whole spirit and aim to traditional Judaism. In the case of John there seem never to have been any such misgivings. This fact alone is enough to mark the radical difference between the two teachers. For all his seeming boldness and originality John belonged essentially to the old order, and had no thought of breaking with it. He indeed prepared the way for Jesus, but it cannot be maintained that he in any sense anticipated His mission.

(*d*) It is when we consider his relation to the Old Testament prophetism that we come in sight of the vital and significant aspects of John's activity. Centuries had passed since the Psalmist lamented that the prophetic spirit had become extinct;[1] and during all that interval there had been no sign of its reappearance. The people had reconciled themselves to waiting until the Messianic age for the next wakening of prophecy; and meanwhile religion was identified wholly with law and ritual. All at once the long silence was broken. There came a Prophet, crying in the wilderness, with a message direct from God.

The Lucan account of John's nativity is probably intended to bring into strong relief this idea of his

[1] Ps 74^9.

prophetic vocation. We have no fair reason for doubting the tradition that John was descended from a priestly family; but the bare fact is elaborated by Luke with a purpose that can hardly be other than symbolical. A prophet arose among the priests. The placid routine of the conventional religion, with its orders of hereditary ministers succeeding one another in the Temple at the set hours, was suddenly interrupted, and God spoke once more by the living voice of a Prophet. It was the belief in his prophetic calling, more even than his actual message, that secured for John the attention of the multitude. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" To this question which He asked of the people, Jesus Himself supplied the answer, "A prophet." The age of Elijah and Isaiah had receded into the dim past, and the prophets loomed out before the popular imagination as sacred, half-legendary figures. The appearance of a new prophet could not fail to excite a wild curiosity. Men thronged to see him and were prepared to give eager attention to his message.

It is evident when we look closely into the record, that John deliberately set himself to impress the people with this sense of his prophetic vocation. He adopted the hairy mantle and leathern girdle which in ancient times had been the distinguishing garb of a prophet.[1] He took up his abode, like Elijah or

[1] Cf. 2 K 1^{8}, Zec 13^{4}.

Amos, in the wilderness. He gave forth his warnings in abrupt language and fiery imagery, modelled on the utterances of the prophets. Now we cannot but acknowledge that in this attempt to revive literally the old prophetic tradition, there was something derivative and artificial. The Old Testament prophet belonged to a particular epoch of religious development, and his function was related to certain definite historical conditions. He was the spokesman and counsellor of the nation, and disappeared when the nation had no independent life of which he could make himself the organ. Long ago, by a natural process, the prophet had given place to the apocalyptist. Israel had ceased to bear an active part in the world's movement, and could only dream of a future which it had no power to mould or accelerate.

The day of the prophets was thus past, and it could not be recalled by the adoption of a peculiar garb and an ascetic mode of life. So far as John aimed at a literal revival of Old Testament prophetism, his work was marred by a certain unreality which deprived it of much of its value. He laid himself open to the taunt of his enemies that he was no true teacher, but a madman or eccentric who was playing a part. It is significant that Jesus, with His sure instinct, avoided the methods of His predecessor, and was content to come "eating and drinking"—bearing Himself in all outward respects

like a man of His own time. But although he sought to enforce them under forms now obsolete, John had truly grasped the essential ideas of ancient prophecy; and this it was that gave meaning to his mission. In the first place, he brought back into the religion of Israel the conception of a living God, who spoke in the present and acted immediately on the world. Under the influence of scribal theology, God had become more and more remote from man's actual life, till He was now a mere abstract Power behind the Law. To John He was the one Lord to whom all men were directly accountable, and who was shortly to manifest Himself to His people. Again, like the prophets of the Old Testament, John insisted on the supremacy of the moral law, and on the need for practical repentance. He had no quarrel with the ceremonial ordinances which held so large a place in the current Pharisaism; but he realised that these were at best of secondary importance. When God summoned men to His Judgment, He would test them solely according to moral standards, and would measure their repentance by their deeds. Once more, John appeared, in the arid Jewish world of his time, as a fresh and vital personality. He taught the people to realise, as they had never done, that God does not reveal Himself through systems of tradition, and "orders" of priests and scribes, but through living men. This had been the highest achievement of the old prophets, that in their own

persons they had stood for God and spoken for Him, and had thus made Him a real and present power. And when John appeared, the Divine will declared itself once again in an impressive personality. Here at last, in the words of the Fourth Evangelist, was "*a man*, sent from God."

It is in virtue of these prophetic elements in his teaching that we can recognise in John the forerunner, who prepared the way for Jesus. In his message of the Kingdom, and even in his intense conviction of its imminence, there was nothing new. He only gave utterance, with a unique force and passion, to that which all men were feeling. But his belief that the Kingdom was now at hand did not spend itself in a mere enthusiasm, or in vague speculations like those of the apocalyptic books. It impelled him to discover how men should make ready, in the interval still left, for the approaching crisis; and he found the answer he sought for in the teaching of the prophets. "John came to you in the way of righteousness."[1] He placed himself in line with the ethical tradition of the Old Testament, and declared that the Judgment would turn on practical obedience, and not on legal conformity or the claims of Jewish descent. The apocalyptic hope was thus brought into relation with the moral law, and became not so much an end in itself as the motive and inspiration of a better life. This

[1] Mt 21^{32}.

leavening of the apocalyptic beliefs of his time with the ethical and religious ideas of prophetism was begun by John; and his work had its issue in our Lord's Gospel of the Kingdom.

In the light of the foregoing discussion we may now approach the crucial question which arises out of the history of John the Baptist. Did he, in some specific manner, prepare the minds of men for the appearance of Jesus as the Messiah? The question resolves itself into two, and they need to be stated and answered separately.

We have first to consider whether John spoke explicitly of the Messiah who was to follow him and to inaugurate the new age. According to our evangelists, he announced himself as simply the herald of a Greater One; and there is no reason to doubt their testimony. The figure of the Messiah had now an assured place in the apocalyptic scheme. If it meets us in the literature, which turns so largely on abstract ideas, it was far more likely to assert itself in vivid and concrete preaching, addressed to the unlearned multitude. None the less, it was the Kingdom and not the Messiah that was paramount in the thought of John. He was primarily concerned with the great fact that the Kingdom was coming;—how it would come—whether by the agency of God Himself or through His chosen representative —was a matter of detail. When he described in

graphic imagery the Judgment about to be held by the Messiah, John was only enforcing on the people, in the manner that would impress them most, the imminence and the reality of the crisis. We need not examine John's teaching, therefore, for any consistent theory of the Messiah. From the brief outline preserved to us it is hard to determine whether he thought of Him as a man like himself, but greater, or as an angelic being; and most probably both conceptions hovered before his mind, and entered into some sort of vague combination, as in the Psalms of Solomon. In any case, the Messiah to whom he looked forward had no independent function or activity. He was merely the instrument through whom God would usher in the Kingdom; and as such he would preside over the events of the latter days. In the name of God he would execute the Judgment, burning the chaff with fire and gathering in the wheat. The Kingdom itself would be the Kingdom of God. The Messiah was only a subordinate figure, whose coming would be the signal for its commencement.

The second question is of a different nature, and is more difficult to answer. From the beginning, if we may accept the Christian tradition, John recognised Jesus as the Messiah, whose coming he had foretold. This is emphatically affirmed in the Fourth Gospel, which regards John solely as the witness to Jesus; and it is plainly suggested in Matthew's account of

the Baptism. The parallel passage of Mark, however, appears to place the incident in a different light. It says nothing of a recognition of Jesus on the part of John; and describes Jesus alone as seeing the dove and hearing the voice from heaven. The revelation, whatever may have been its character, is represented as personal to Jesus Himself. There can be little doubt that the inference to be drawn from this Marcan narrative is the true one. John had no presentiment that in Jesus the Messiah stood before him; and still less did he point Him out to others as the Greater One of whom he had spoken. If he had done so, the whole ministry of Jesus would necessarily have taken another course. From the first He would have been the centre of an awestruck interest and expectancy, of which we can find no trace in the earlier portion of the record. The quiet labours of the Galilaean months would have been impossible; the gradual disclosure of the Messianic claim to the disciples would have been superfluous and meaningless. When the Fourth Evangelist changes the whole framework of the life of Jesus, and presents Him at the very outset as the professed Messiah, he shows a true sense of the consequences that must follow from a recognition by John. At a later stage, undoubtedly, John was led to associate his half-defined hopes of the Messiah with the mighty works performed by Jesus. His sending of the embassy from prison is one of the most certainly

historical, as it is one of the most illuminating incidents in the Gospel narrative; and we shall have further occasion to consider it in its several aspects. But we shall see that it bears witness not to a wavering faith in Jesus, but to a faith that was just beginning. For the first time, as he heard in prison of the Wonder-worker who had followed him, the thought had dawned on John that this might be "He that should come." It was a sudden hope, improbable even to his own mind, which had been wakened in him by the marvellous rumours concerning Jesus. That he should have entertained it at an earlier time, when Jesus was one of the vague multitude who sought his baptism, is utterly unthinkable.

The mission of John had indeed a determining influence on the life of Jesus; of that we have ample proof in our Lord's ever-recurring allusions to His predecessor. But in order to understand the influence we have probably to reverse the theory which has commonly been maintained in the Christian tradition. From the time of the Gospels downwards, all interest has been concentrated on the question of what John thought of Jesus. It has been assumed that he must somehow have discerned in Him the coming Messiah, and thus have helped Him to a clearer assurance of His supreme vocation. But the real question to be answered is almost certainly the other one. What

did Jesus think of John? What significance did He attach to that imposing messenger who had so closely preceded Him? In his own eyes John was simply a prophet, whose task it was to announce the approaching Judgment and call men to repentance. As a prophet he claimed to possess a special authority, and attributed to his baptism a real as well as a symbolic value. But he fully acknowledged that his work was one of preparation, and that the Kingdom itself, with its mysterious actors and events, was yet to come.

To Jesus, however, John was "more than a prophet." He was no other than the returning Elijah who, according to the current eschatology, was to appear at the commencement of the great closing scenes. If we may believe the Fourth Gospel, John expressly denied that he was Elijah;[1] in any case, we have no evidence that he ever put forward such a claim or deemed it conceivable. It was Jesus alone who identified John with the Elijah of the latter days; and in so doing He was aware of the boldness and strangeness of His conjecture. He imparts the knowledge to His disciples in veiled language, as a mystery which they will hardly comprehend. They are still looking towards the future, confident that there can be no thought of the Kingdom till Elijah has first appeared. But He tells them that the Kingdom is nearer than they know. They may not

[1] Jn 1^{21}.

be "able to receive" the secret—for none except Himself has yet guessed it—but "Elijah has come already."[1]

Our Lord's attitude towards His own mission must have been profoundly affected by this estimate of His predecessor. The advent of Elijah was to be the immediate signal for the great consummation. It would be followed, as all men believed, by the coming of the Messiah to execute judgment and bring in the Kingdom of God. When He had once identified John the Baptist with Elijah, the way became clear to Jesus for the full conviction, and the assertion before the world, of His own Messianic calling. "The law and the prophets had been until John;" and now the age of preparation had given place to the age of fulfilment. Elijah had at last appeared. The mysterious messenger who was to stand at the very threshold of the Kingdom had come and gone. He who had been appointed to follow him and bring his work to fulfilment could be no other than the Messiah Himself.

In the life of Jesus, therefore, John the Baptist had a significance which cannot be wholly accounted for by his own personality and message. Unawares to himself he hastened the coming of the Messiah

[1] Mt 11^{14} 17^{10-13}. It is highly probable that the verses Mt 17^{10-13} have been shifted from their natural place after 16^{28} by the introduction of the story of the Transfiguration.

whom he had foretold. The claim of Jesus to Messiahship was indeed founded in the last resort on an inward conviction; but His estimate of John reacted on that conviction and served to illuminate and strengthen it. We shall see reason to believe that more especially in the later period of His ministry His mind reverted to His predecessor and to the fate which had befallen him. In the death of the new Elijah at the hands of his enemies, He saw the foreshadowing of His own. The mission of John not only confirmed Him in the knowledge of His great vocation, but pointed out to Him the road along which it would be accomplished.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KINGDOM IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS.

The ministry of Jesus, in its initial period, seemed to be little more than a continuation of that of John the Baptist. "Now, after John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Kingdom of God and saying, The time is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel."[1] But although He thus took up the message of His predecessor, He came forward from the outset as an independent teacher. He had never, if we may trust our records, been a disciple of John. He met him, apparently for the first time, on the occasion of His baptism; and between that meeting and the commencement of His own ministry there elapsed only the short interval which He spent alone in the wilderness. He practised no baptismal rite, and adopted a method of teaching and a manner of life which compelled men to remark a contrast between Himself and John. The group of John's disciples remained separate, perpetuating their master's work along its own lines, and do not appear to have

[1] Mk $1^{14.\ 15}$.

recognised Jesus as in any sense his successor. It was John undoubtedly who gave the immediate impulse to Jesus, and who awakened in the people that mood of expectation to which His message could make appeal. He availed Himself of the work of John; but it only enabled Him to give effect to thoughts and purposes that had been ripening in His own mind during the years of solitary reflection before His baptism. It is evident from the records even of His earliest ministry that He had already pondered His message, in all its far-reaching issues and applications. To every question addressed to Him He had an answer; He was never betrayed for a moment into any confusion or inconsistency. The great ideas which He had so completely mastered could not have been hastily appropriated from another, during a few days or weeks of casual discipleship. He must have won them for Himself, and considered and tested them, until they had become a living part of Him. At some points, His teaching may have been coincident with that of John; but it is inconceivable that He was merely a borrower. He came forward in His own right, and was original and independent from the first.

Jesus was Himself conscious of this independence. He freely criticised His predecessor, as one who had belonged to a different age and who had been limited by conditions which were valid no longer.[1] Never-

[1] Mt $11^{11ff.}$.

theless, He deliberately attached His mission to that of John; and His motives in doing so are not difficult to conjecture. He desired, in the first place, to associate Himself with the new conception of the Kingdom as immediately at hand. The days of uncertain anticipation and reckoning of times and seasons were now past. Men were to think of the great consummation as actually at the door, and were to watch for its coming and prepare themselves to meet it. Again, He welcomed the revival of the prophetic tradition which had now broken in upon the long reign of mechanical legalism. John had "come in the way of righteousness"[1]—had insisted that in the approaching Judgment the moral test alone would be decisive. In this reassertion of the supreme worth of the moral law, Jesus found the starting-point for a new and higher message. Once more, in the teaching of John, the idea of the Kingdom had been separated from the purely national idea. John himself does not appear to have been fully aware of all that was involved in this separation; but he had at least laid down the principle that the new community would consist solely of the righteous. Jesus took up the principle, and freed it from all its limitations. He proclaimed a Kingdom which would be open not only to righteous Jews, but to all true servants of God.[2]

[1] Mt 21^{32}. [2] Mt 8^{11}.

The Kingdom of God as conceived by John was the new age, foretold in the Apocalypses. He described its coming in terms of the traditional imagery, although his chief interest was in the moral preparation for the Kingdom, rather than in the Kingdom itself. Jesus, like John, fell back on the expectation that was current among the Jewish people. His teaching assumes throughout that all men know what is meant by the Kingdom, and that the idea itself stands in need of no definition.[1] He makes constant reference to the calamities of the last days, the circumstances of the Judgment, the dissolution of the present order of nature and society. Down even to details the conventional features of the apocalyptic hope reappear in His teaching. But while He thus accepted the idea of the Kingdom as He found it, He employed it only as a framework for His own original message. The speculative problems on which the thought of Enoch, Baruch, and 4th Esdras is mainly centred have little interest to Him. He refuses to assign a date to the final consummation or to solve any of the riddles concerning the nature of the future life. To the question whether few will be saved He returns no answer—declaring at the same time that such inquiries are futile and that each man must think of his own duty. Adopting

[1] The frequent formula, "The Kingdom is like unto," refers not to the nature of the Kingdom itself, but to the conditions on which it must be entered, the character of its members, the signs of its coming, etc.

though He does the current eschatological ideas, He is at no pains to combine them in a consistent picture, and observes no uniform order in His forecast of the final events. He can imagine Lazarus as carried immediately into Abraham's bosom, while elsewhere He does not expect the resurrection until after the Judgment. Thus He deals quite freely with the apocalyptic scheme which He takes over, as a matter of course, from the ordinary belief of His time; and partially resolves it into imagery. Its details must not be pressed too literally, any more than His comparison of the Kingdom to a banquet, or to an inheritance into which the righteous will enter, as Israel entered into the promised land. The apocalyptic references cannot indeed be explained, like these others, in a purely figurative sense. They form a constant element in His thought of the future, and prove that He acquiesced, up to a certain point, in the popular eschatology. But His conception of the Kingdom cannot be wholly interpreted by means of the apocalyptic tradition. It is impregnated with new religious ideas, and needs to be examined in the light of His own teaching.

Before entering on the discussion of what Jesus meant by the Kingdom, we are confronted with several preliminary difficulties. (*a*) In the first place, why does He use the term "Kingdom" in speaking of the consummation now at hand? The term is practically

never found in the apocalyptic writers, who conceive of the great future simply as a new age, in which the present world will pass away and give place to another. Probably, however, among the people generally the idea of a Kingdom, with its suggestion of a restored Israel, was never superseded by the more vague and speculative idea. Its re-emergence in the later Rabbinical literature can best be explained from its thus surviving among the people; and in the same manner we may account for its use by John the Baptist. Appealing to the common people, he availed himself of the term which was most intelligible to them, and by his own preaching he gave it a still wider currency. The usage of Jesus was no doubt determined, in the first instance, by that of John. He addressed Himself to the expectations which John had newly awakened, and His message would have lost half its force if He had substituted some other watchword for the now familiar one. At the same time, there were other motives which may have weighed with Him in His choice of the term "Kingdom." It was derived immediately from the prophetic tradition, and carried with it a scriptural consecration. It was vivid and imaginative, and thus fell in with the prevailing character of His thought. Above all, it lent a religious significance to the abstract idea of a coming age. In the new time that was at hand God Himself would be supreme, and would choose out a people to serve Him.

(*b*) How are we to explain the apparent discrepancy among the evangelists as to the precise expression used by Jesus? According to Matthew He refers almost constantly to the "Kingdom of Heaven"; while in Mark and Luke He speaks of the "Kingdom of God." This latter term occurs also in certain Matthæan passages;[1] and it has sometimes been inferred that Jesus Himself employed both terms, with different shades of meaning implied in them. While He held the general idea that God would be King in the new age, He sought to define the Kingdom in its special character as a heavenly order, which would break in upon the present earthly one. But there is nothing to indicate that the variation of phrase is other than accidental. The reverence paid to the sacred Name had led to the use of circumlocutions whereby the direct mention of it might be avoided. A striking example of this custom is afforded us in the dialogue between Jesus and the high priest:[2] "Art thou the Son of the Blessed?" "I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power." Of all the periphrastic names the most generally adopted was "Heaven." It is found continually in the Rabbinical literature. It meets us in the Gospels, in the familiar verse of the parable: "I have sinned against Heaven and before thee." There can be little doubt that "Kingdom of Heaven" is simply an alternative to

[1] Mt 6^{33} 12^{28} 21^{31} 21^{43}. [2] Mk $14^{61.62}$.

"Kingdom of God." It may have been substituted by the evangelist, or it may occasionally have been used by Jesus Himself, in preference to the more direct phrase. In either case, we have here to do with a mere matter of language. The thought of Jesus, whatever may have been His precise words, was that the Kingdom belonged to God and would come about by His sole act.

(*c*) A much more important question concerns the meaning to be attached to the word *Βασιλεία*. The term "Kingdom," by which it is commonly translated, suggests a sphere of dominion, locally defined; but it is practically certain that the New Testament expression must be taken in a wider and more abstract sense. It refers not so much to a realm wherein God is King, as to the fact of His Kingship, His absolute supremacy. In all the stages of its development, this appears to be the meaning involved in the conception of the Kingdom. The hope of Psalmists and prophets was for a glorious assertion of God's sovereignty, in face of the evil powers which seemed to have usurped the government of this world. Daniel in his vision sees the dominion passing from the heathen empires to the people of God. Through them a reign of God was to commence on earth and to dispossess the ancient tyrannies. By the apocalyptic writers the same thought is expressed in such a manner as to preclude all ambiguity. Instead of a "Kingdom" we have mention only of a "new

age"—a changed condition of things, in which the will of God will absolutely prevail. It was this apocalyptic idea that found utterance in the proclamation of John the Baptist, and of Jesus after him. They announced the coming of the *Βασιλεία*—the Kingship or supremacy of God. But while this must be recognised as the primary meaning of the term, we have to allow for a certain blending, in our Lord's mind, of a concrete idea with the more abstract one. The Aramaic word, like its Greek equivalent, bore a double significance; and it was impossible to keep the two meanings strictly separate. Again and again when Jesus speaks of the coming reign of God, He appears to connect it definitely with the new community in which it will be realised. The thought of a kingship passes into that of a Kingdom—an ideal Israel, ruled by God. This aspect of His teaching has possibly been emphasised in our Gospel records by the intrusion of subsequent ideas concerning the nature and purpose of the Church; but we have no reason to doubt that He Himself gave the impulse to the later development. He looked forward not only to a reign of God, but to a restoration, under new and larger conditions, of the ancient theocracy. It is important to bear in mind this other side of His conception, in view of the light which it throws on the nature of His Messianic claim. His attitude to the Messiahship, as we shall endeavour to show in a later chapter, was partly determined by the

theocratic idea which formed a real element in His thought of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus may therefore be described most comprehensively as the new order, consequent on the assertion by God of His sovereignty over the world. This new order is apparently to find the scene of its realisation on earth. The heavenly world is regarded as already in perfect harmony with the Divine plan; and the Kingdom will come when that higher condition of things will be established universally. The will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus does not appear, like the apocalyptic writers, to contemplate an entire destruction of the present world, that it may be replaced by another. He assumes, rather, that the new world will be identical with the old, but miraculously transfigured and purified. All that is evil or defective in the present will be done away. The world's history will make a fresh beginning, and will conform itself henceforth to a more perfect law. Two features are to be distinguished in the picture that is set before us of this new order. There will be a renovation, on the one hand, of the natural world. The prophets and apocalyptists had foretold a time when the fruitfulness of the earth would be marvellously increased, when savage beasts would be reconciled with one another and with man, when all things noxious and unsightly would disappear. Jesus does not dwell on

this physical transformation, but He evidently presupposes it. He thinks of a series of convulsions in the frame of nature, preparatory to the coming of the Kingdom. He takes for granted that man's outward life will be set free from the evils and limitations imposed upon it by the present imperfect conditions. He refers to the "new wine"—that is, wine of a purer, richer vintage—which He will drink with His disciples in the Kingdom of God.[1] We cannot fully understand His conception of the Kingdom unless we take account of this material background, which is subordinate in His thought but essential to it. Like Paul, He regards the whole creation as groaning and travailing together. The future redemption of God's people will be only an episode, although the central and most glorious one, of a world-wide drama. In the new age, therefore, all things will undergo a renovation; but Jesus is chiefly concerned with the renewal in human life. He anticipates a complete change of all existing conditions. The evils now incident to humanity—sickness, poverty, sorrow, and above all death—will be found no longer. The relations in which men stand to each other will be wholly altered. There will be no distinctions of rank and class. Even a bond like that of marriage will cease to be necessary. It belongs to the present order, and in the age to come men "will be like the angels in heaven."[2] Their earthly nature, with its

[1] Mk 14^{25} = Mt 26^{29}, Lk 22^{18}. [2] Mk 12^{25} = Mt 22^{30}, Lk 20^{35}.

needs and its imperfections, will be transformed into something higher. And this change of all present conditions will be chiefly manifest in the renewal of man's moral life. The heirs of the Kingdom will know God's will, and submit themselves to it with a single heart. They will enter into a new relation to God, who will acknowledge them as His children. It is this inward change involved in the coming of the Kingdom to which the thought of Jesus is mainly directed. All else in His anticipation of the new age is subsidiary to the one grand fact that men will be conformed to the will of God and enter into fellowship with Him.

From the sharp contrast between the future order and that which now exists, it might be inferred that Jesus accepted in its full extent the dualism of the apocalyptic thinkers. The later Judaism, influenced partly by Persian speculations, still more by the mood of pessimism which had now become habitual, had settled down to the conviction that the present age was under the dominion of Satan. No relief was possible until the coming age, when God would overthrow His adversary and resume the government of His world. "Then," according to the classic passage in the Assumption of Moses, "His Kingdom will be manifest in all His creatures, and Beelzebub will have an end, and all sorrow will be driven away."[1] With this apocalyptic dualism Jesus is in formal agreement. He thinks of Satan as enthroned over the earth—as

[1] Ass Mos 10^{1}.

the strong man ruling the house from which a stronger must dislodge him. Satan is the author not only of moral evil, but of all disease and suffering; and the prevalence of these things in the world is evidence of his dominant power. The advent of the Kingdom is to mark the downfall of Satan and the scattering of all his forces. Nevertheless, this dualism plays only a superficial part in the teaching of Jesus, and belongs to the traditional forms under which He thought rather than to His own conception. He never ceased to regard the world as even now governed by God, who clothes the grass of the field and cares for the sparrows. He discerned in the present the operation of the same Divine laws that will prevail hereafter, and connected even suffering and death with the will of God. The world as He saw it was not a mere kingdom of Satan over against the future Kingdom of God, but an imperfect world into which evil had somehow entered and thwarted the Divine purpose. The new order, therefore, will not be different in kind from the present order, but will consist, rather, in a purifying and restoration. God's will is accomplishing itself even now, in spite of all the powers that are seeking to frustrate it; and when the Kingdom comes it will reign without hindrance in a renovated world.

We now arrive at two questions, closely related to each other, which are of crucial importance in the

interpretation of Jesus' teaching. They have partly answered themselves in the course of the previous discussion, but it is necessary to state them more definitely and consider the issues involved in them.

(1) In the first place, did Jesus expect a gradual coming of the Kingdom, by a process of natural development, or did He conceive of it as breaking in suddenly by the immediate act of God? There can be no doubt as to the view held by the apocalyptic writers. They assume that the world, as it now is, has run its course, and contains within it no germ or possibility of better things. It is wholly given over to the power of Satan, and nothing else will suffice than that God Himself should interpose, and by a new creative act bring in the new age. This idea of a sudden and miraculous advent of the Kingdom seems also to determine the message of John the Baptist. But it is possible to argue that Jesus here departed from the traditional apocalyptic hope. To Him, as we have seen, the world was not merely the domain of Satan. He recognised that the power of God was working in it, and the idea of a sudden break and a miraculous intervention was thus unnecessary to His hope of the future. There are passages in His teaching which seem directly to suggest a coming of the Kingdom by a gradual process of fulfilment. He compares it to leaven, or still more explicitly to seed. He dwells on the contrast between the small

beginnings of God's work and the grand consummation in which it will issue. Yet we must be careful not to read too much of our modern conception of development into the thought of Jesus. When we look more closely into those parables of the springing up of seed, we find that the point of comparison is not the slow unfolding of hidden potentialities, but simply the transition from something small to something great. This transition is the chief miracle of the natural world, and as such it is emblematic of all miraculous Divine action. It is in this sense that Paul draws his illustration from seed, when he argues for the possibility of a bodily resurrection.[1] From the bare grain sown in the ground, God causes the harvest to spring forth; may He not also create a glorious body from that which has fallen to decay? Jesus likewise takes the seed as the emblem of all miracle. While men are sleeping it grows up, we know not how, by the agency of mysterious Divine forces.[2] The change from small to great, from the tiny mustard-seed to the spreading tree, is not regarded as a mere natural process, but as a wonder, in which we can discern the power of God.

But however we interpret them, the sayings that seem to imply a gradual coming of the Kingdom must be taken in connection with the far more numerous and emphatic sayings in which a sudden

[1] 1 Co 15[36ff.].

[2] Mk 4[26ff.].

and miraculous coming is undoubtedly assumed. The characteristic word employed by Jesus for the advent of the Kingdom is ἀναφαίνεσθαι—a word expressly chosen in order to fix attention on the startling nature of the manifestation. There will be no slow gradations which can be traced and calculated. The Kingdom will "shine out"—will reveal itself instantaneously. Some of the most solemn warnings of Jesus derive their whole weight and impressiveness from this thought of the suddenness of the consummation. It will leap on the world as if from ambush. While men are in the midst of their ordinary work and pleasures, apprehensive of nothing, the great day will overwhelm and separate them. It will burst like the flood of Noah on a careless generation. It will flash like the lightning all in a moment from one side of heaven to another. Jesus heaps image upon image in order to make men realise this bewildering suddenness of the advent of the Kingdom, and the consequent need of entire preparedness, so that every hour will find them watching. His language is of such a character that we cannot read into it any mere accommodation to a familiar feature of current apocalyptic theory. The accepted theory gave expression to His own belief, that the Kingdom was not to grow into being by some process of historical development, but was to break in all at once, by the direct intervention of God.

(2) We pass, then, to the second and more important question: Did Jesus conceive of the Kingdom as purely future, or as already, in some measure, beginning? It is obvious that our answer to the first question determines the answer which we must give to this one. There can be no partial realisation in the present of a change which by its very nature is wrought suddenly and miraculously. The idea of the supernatural coming of the Kingdom necessarily involves that of its futurity. This second question, however, is so vital in its bearing on our Lord's conception of the Kingdom, and is beset with such peculiar difficulties, that it requires a more detailed consideration.

In the first place, we have to make allowance for a factor which influences the Gospels throughout, and which at this point especially obscures and complicates the genuine teaching of Jesus. Our Gospel narratives were written in their existing form at a time when the idea of the Church had begun to displace the idea of the Kingdom. It is not difficult to trace the causes which led to this displacement. Jesus Himself had spoken of a community which would inherit the coming age, and had conceived of the *βασιλεία* as at once the reign of God and the theocracy of the new Israel. It was only natural that in course of time, when the apocalyptic hope of His own generation had partly lost its meaning, His sayings about the Kingdom

should be wholly transferred to the community. His prophecies in their immediate sense had failed. No Divine event had suddenly shaken the world and ushered in the new age of the reign of God. But in the Christian Church the higher order of things was already manifesting itself, and the promises of Jesus had thus found a real fulfilment. In the Epistles of Paul this new conception of the Kingdom alternates with the older conception. To Paul, as to Jesus, the Kingdom is the reign of God, in which all things will be transformed and the righteous will enter on their inheritance.[1] Yet he speaks of the servants of God as even now constituting the Kingdom.[2] The Church as a visible community is the heavenly order realising itself on earth, and as such it possesses the Spirit of God for its guiding principle. In the later writings of the New Testament, and most notably in the Epistle to the Ephesians, this view has almost entirely superseded the other. The Church is invested with a mystical significance as the one object of Christ's promises concerning the Kingdom of God.

It is not surprising, therefore, that subsequent beliefs have reacted on the tradition of the teaching of Jesus. The wonder is that in our Gospel narratives His main conception, which to the later generation had largely become unintelligible, has on the whole been transmitted so faithfully. None the

[1] Gal 5^{20}, 1 Co $6^{9f.}$ 15^{50}. [2] Col 1^{13}, 1 Co 4^{20}, Ro 14^{17}.

less, there was an inevitable tendency to adapt the words of Jesus to the existing conditions. The Gospel of Matthew, more particularly, bears evident traces of a modification of the original sayings under the influence of ecclesiastical doctrine. Throughout the series of parables in the 13th chapter, the idea of the Church is blended with that of the Kingdom in such a manner as frequently to overlay the real intention. The parables of the Tares and the Drag-net—to take only these two examples—have obvious reference to the early Church, which had begun to feel the contrast between its actual character and its ideal claims. The evangelist, we need not doubt, is recording two genuine parables; but he has so construed them as to give them an application to the problem of his own day. His anxiety to connect the Church with the message of Jesus is apparent from his introduction, on two occasions,[1] of the actual word *ἐκκλησία*. It is indeed conceivable that Jesus may have used this word, as descriptive of the new Israel which would inherit the coming age. But in the Matthæan passages it signifies the Church as a definite institution, with powers of discipline over its members; and an anticipation of this kind was entirely foreign to the thought of Jesus. He looked for a great crisis, almost immediately at hand, in which all formal institutions would come to an end. God's cause would achieve

[1] Mt 16^{18} 18^{17}.

its final victory ; and there would be need no longer for any association of men to maintain and advance it. The tendency which plainly reveals itself in the case of Matthew is discernible, in a less obvious degree, through all the Gospels. Sayings that concern the apocalyptic woes of the last times are referred to the persecutions, soon to overtake the disciples. Warnings against arrogance and self-seeking are so applied as to enforce the law of equality which ought to prevail among members of the Church. Even in Mark's parable of the Sower, which in substance must certainly be assigned to the genuine tradition, we can detect the presence of an alien element. The sowing of the word of the Kingdom is so represented as to carry an allusion to the great missionary work, undertaken by the Christian Church.

We have to acknowledge, therefore, that our records of the teaching of Jesus have been affected, to some extent, by the ecclesiastical idea. The evangelists, careful as they are to reproduce the original message, are unable to apprehend it in its purity. They assume that the thought of Jesus was consciously directed towards the Church, in which His work had found its historical fulfilment. For the impression that is left upon us by not a few passages in the Gospels, this intrusion of later doctrine is partly accountable. Jesus appears to speak of the Kingdom as already, in some manner,

beginning. He comes before us, not only as the herald of the approaching consummation, but as the founder of a community. The growth of this community is identified with the coming of the Kingdom, which is thus deprived of its wholly apocalyptic character.

But, apart from sayings and parables that bear the marks of later reflection, there are certain passages of undoubted authenticity in which a present existence of the Kingdom would seem to be implied. The following may be selected as the most noteworthy of these passages: (1) "The Kingdom of God is among you."[1] (2) "But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you."[2] (3) "There hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he."[3] (4) "The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you."[4] (5) "I behold Satan as lightning fall from heaven."[5] (6) "Many kings and prophets desired to see the things that ye see, and saw them not."[6] These passages, to which others of like tenor might be added, cannot be lightly set aside. They afford us, as we shall presently see, an all-important clue to one aspect of the message of Jesus. Yet when we examine them closely, they in no case affirm an actual commencement of the Kingdom. Take, for

[1] Lk 17^{20}. [2] Mt 12^{28}, Lk 11^{20}. [3] Mt 11^{11}, Lk 7^{28}.
[4] Mt 21^{31}. [5] Lk 10^{18}. [6] Lk 10^{24}.

example, the first and most emphatic of the sayings quoted above. Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, and protests against their view of the Kingdom as so remote and shadowy that its coming can only be determined by abstruse calculation. He declares that the great day is even now imminent, and will break on the world suddenly, without sign or warning. Men will still be disputing about it, and straining their eyes into the distance, when lo! the Kingdom is in the midst of them. The saying thus expresses, in vivid dramatic fashion, the nearness of the Kingdom and the unexpectedness of its coming. It will be here as a realised fact while it still seems to be a distant dream. In the other passages quoted, the present is likewise to be construed in a more or less dramatic sense. Jesus throws His mind into the future—apprehends it as so near and certain that He can speak of it as present. The consummation which kings and prophets hoped for is on the verge of its fulfilment. The disciples may regard themselves as even now the inheritors of the new age, which is all but come. A peculiar significance belongs to these sayings, as expressing the confidence with which Jesus awaited an immediate advent of the Kingdom; and in this aspect they will call for closer consideration. But they do not necessarily imply that the Kingdom has now commenced. The events to which they refer are still future, but are realised so intensely that they seem already to be fulfilled.

That the prevailing conception of Jesus was that of a future Kingdom seems to admit of little doubt or question. The idea of futurity constituted the very essence of the doctrine of the new age, as it had come down in prophecy and apocalyptic. From the evil times in which their lot was cast, men turned to a coming day, when the conditions of the present would all be changed, and the glorious reign of God would set in. It was a future Kingdom, likewise, which was proclaimed by John the Baptist. His message centred on the fact that although the Kingdom was at hand, an interval still remained, during which men could prepare themselves and repent. If Jesus had abandoned this idea of futurity, He would have emptied the terms He used of their whole meaning. For the Kingdom, as understood by His hearers, He would have substituted a different, esoteric conception to which He alone possessed the key. It is clear, however, that He took up the current expectation of a coming age. He proclaimed at the outset of His ministry that the Kingdom was at hand—not commencing, but about to commence; and we find Him at the close still looking forward to a future Kingdom. In the final apocalyptic discourses He spoke of the events that would usher in its coming, and bade His disciples watch for them. At the Last Supper, He saw a dark gulf still separating Him from the Kingdom, where He would hold the Messianic feast. Throughout His teaching this idea of futurity

is again and again expressed in unmistakable language. The Beatitudes are all of the nature of promises; they tell of an inheritance for which the disciples must wait, while others who serve the present age have received their reward. The Lord's Prayer centres in the petition, "Thy Kingdom come"—a petition which would be meaningless if the Kingdom were begun already. The message to the cities of Israel[1] is meant to prepare men for a crisis which has not yet declared itself. These are only a few of many instances, no less emphatic. The future conception is not merely suggested, in occasional sayings of uncertain import and context, but is plainly asserted, and enters into the very substance of the thought of Jesus. To interpret it as in any sense subordinate or accidental is to distort the whole character of His teaching.

Jesus looked, then, for a Kingdom that was still in the future, and that was to break in suddenly by the intervention of God. His view was thus far the traditional one, and was not essentially different from that of John the Baptist. Nevertheless, it was marked by another element, which afforded the point of departure for His own distinctive message. He thought of the Kingdom as future, but yet as so near at hand that its power could be felt already. The influences sent forth from it were beginning to act

[1] Mt $6^{7f.}$ = Lk $10^{1f.}$, Mt $10^{5ff.}$.

on the present; it was possible for men to discern those influences and allow them to operate in their lives. This, in our judgment, is the true significance of those sayings of Jesus in which a present realisation of the Kingdom appears to be contemplated. They are dramatic in character and affirm the imminence of the Kingdom rather than its actual presence. But Jesus is assured that it is imminent, because He can point already to indubitable signs and guarantees of its coming. He is not, like John the Baptist, a mere herald, delivering a message which may possibly be mistaken. Along with the promise He offers men an earnest of the Kingdom. He can bring them within the sweep of its influence, so that they may reach forward to it, and possess it by anticipation, even now.

It is in this direction that we must look if we would understand the real import of the miracles, which occupied such a cardinal place in the ministry of Jesus. A discussion of the larger questions involved in the miracles is unnecessary for our present purpose. We may admit that a tendency was at work, almost from the beginning, to extend and heighten the marvellous element in the Gospel history. Incidents that were capable of a natural explanation were set down as miracles. Parables spoken by Jesus were transformed into wonderful actions. Moral and spiritual truths were allegorised and wrought themselves into the narrative as historical

facts. But when the fullest allowance is made for these later modifications, there still remains a side of the activity of Jesus which cannot be wholly explained. The fact about Him that impressed the minds of men in His lifetime and was most vividly remembered after His death was His exercise of marvellous powers, directed especially to the healing of disease. These powers were not merely attributed to Him by popular imagination. He Himself, as we can infer from many an undoubted saying, was conscious that He possessed them, and relied on them without misgiving in the prosecution of His work.

What, then, was the significance that Jesus Himself attached to His miracles? His followers connected them, naturally, with the wonder of His own personality; and in this sense they have been interpreted by succeeding times. Christian apologists have taken their stand on the miracles as the irrefragable evidence of the divinity of Christ. They play a part even in the Synoptic Gospels as supplying an attestation of the Messianic claim, while the Fourth Evangelist regards them frankly as the σημεῖα—the signs by which Jesus demonstrated that He was no other than the Son of God. These, however, are subsequent interpretations, and we need to get behind them in order to discover the theory of His miracles which was held by Jesus Himself. It can be gathered with sufficient clearness from a variety of sayings recorded

in the Gospels. He appears to connect His wonder-working gift, not so much with Himself as with the new age which was about to dawn. The dominion of Satan was presently to be broken; and the miracles were the palpable signs that it was already yielding. They were the premonitions of the great coming change—the first stirrings of a new power that was soon to manifest itself universally. So far from claiming that the works of miracle are peculiar to Himself, Jesus assumes that His disciples, if they will, may perform them also; and attributes their failure to their want of faith.[1] He sends them forth on a mission, not only to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom, but to attest its imminence by healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils.[2] When they return and tell of the acts of miracle wrought by them, He rejoices to know that the powers of the coming age have begun to operate, not only through Himself, but through others.[3] Along many channels the new influence was surging in, and the day was all but come when Satan would be dethroned.

This account of the miracles has its most definite expression in the saying, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come unto you."[4] Jesus accepts the contemporary belief that physical disease is due to the agency of malignant spirits; and on the ground of this belief explains the

[1] Mt 17^{19} = Lk 17^{6}, Mt 21^{21}.
[2] Mt 10^{8}.
[3] Lk 10^{18}.
[4] Mt 12^{28} = Lk 11^{20}.

true import of His works of healing. The powers of evil are conscious that their day is over. They recognise the approach of a higher power and have begun already to give way before it. It is to be observed that the saying itself forms the climax and summing up of an argument. Jesus has been accused of exercising control over evil spirits because He was acting in the name of Satan their master. But He reasons that the powers of evil are all necessarily leagued together. The spirits which have lodged in the possessed are only the outposts of a great confederacy of evil; and Satan will not make war against himself. Thus it is concluded that the works of healing can be nothing else than the first indications of the final conflict between God and His adversary. "The Kingdom is come unto you." In the miracles men could discern the manifest signs that the old order was breaking up; and in a little while God would achieve His victory.

Thus while Jesus adhered to the traditional conception of the Kingdom as lying still in the future, He believed that already in a certain measure it was declaring itself. The consummation was at hand—so nearly arrived that the world could feel the breath of its coming. Powers that belonged to the new age had thrown themselves forward into the present. It was possible for men not only to wait confidently for the Kingdom, but to cast in

their lot with it and order their lives by its higher law. This was the thought that afforded a starting-point to the teaching of Jesus, on all its various sides. He regarded the Kingdom as already within the reach of men. He sought to bring them under its influence, and by His own work and personality to impart to them the new life.

CHAPTER V.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE KINGDOM.

Jesus conceived of the Kingdom as the new age, in which the sovereignty of God would be fully realised. It was so near at hand that its powers and influences could be felt already; but the actual consummation was still to come, and was the object of hope and waiting. The work of Jesus, therefore, was in the first instance one of preparation. Like John the Baptist, He proclaimed that the Kingdom was near, and sought to effect in men such a change of moral condition that they would be worthy to have part in it.

In its superficial aspect the message of Jesus was so closely related to that of John that it can be summarised by the evangelist in almost identical words—"The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and receive the gospel."[1] To the people generally, although they were conscious of something new and authoritative in the preaching of Jesus, He seemed to be merely continuing the work of John. Never-

[1] Mk 1^{15}.

theless, from the very beginning there was a profound difference between the two messages. They both consisted in a summons to repentance, which owed its force to the nearness of the Kingdom; but "repentance" meant more to Jesus than it had done to His predecessor. His earlier teaching, as reflected in the Sermon on the Mount, is mainly devoted to the unfolding of that deeper import which He gave to the familiar word.

John had come forward as a prophet; and while he never broke entirely free from contemporary Judaism, he had sought, like the prophets of the Old Testament, to assert the sovereign claim of the moral law. From the brief outline of his ethical teaching which is preserved to us, we are able to distinguish, at least in a general fashion, its essential features. He insisted on a "change of mind" which should have its practical evidence and outcome in a change of conduct. Merchants were to deal honestly, soldiers to content themselves with their wages, public officials to exercise their power justly and humanely. It does not appear, from all this, that John had transcended the Jewish conception of morality as an outward obedience to the commandments of God. What he required was a change of actual behaviour; and so long as this was effected he did not concern himself with the quality of the change or the motives which had wrought it. Indeed, the one motive which he relied on to bring about the desired reformation

was that of fear, awakened in his hearers by the menace of the "wrath to come." To Jesus, on the other hand, repentance was worthless unless it signified a real change of mind. A new sort of conduct was necessary; but it was to have its springs in a renewal of the moral nature. It was valuable only in so far as it was the outward expression of a will that had been inwardly conformed to the will of God. The ethical teaching of the Gospels is everywhere penetrated with this new conception of the nature of repentance. Not only is the Jewish tradition swept aside and replaced by the original commandments, but each commandment is resolved into its essence. The act is traced back to the thought out of which it proceeds, and this again to the fundamental will and disposition. Thus the law of God ceases to be a rule imposed from without, and capable of fulfilment by a formal and mechanical obedience. It is transformed into an inward law to which men submit themselves gladly and spontaneously, because their own will is in harmony with the Divine will. The repentance which Jesus called for was nothing less than this radical change. He declared that no reformation was possible until men became again as little children—divesting themselves utterly of the old will, and serving God in newness of heart.

This, however, was only one side of Jesus' preaching of repentance. The moral demand was combined

with another, which might seem at first sight to be altogether different in character. As an indispensable condition of entering the Kingdom, men were required to "leave all and follow Him." They were to abandon their former employments, to sell all that they had and give to the poor, to dissever their family ties, even the most sacred. Jesus Himself had set the example of this renunciation of everything connected with His past life; and He seems to have enjoined it consistently on those who offered themselves as His disciples. We have here a peculiar feature of His teaching, and one which left deep traces on subsequent Christianity. During the early centuries it fell in with the prevailing mood of Greek and Oriental thought, and encouraged an ascetic attitude to the material life, as in some way hostile to the higher life of the spirit. But there is no evidence that any speculative element of this kind entered into the teaching of Jesus. A morbid estrangement from the world was completely alien to His mind and temper. He Himself pointed to the contrast between the austere prophet of the wilderness and the Son of Man who came eating and drinking; and this difference in the two teachers seems to have impressed their contemporaries more than any other.

How, then, are we to explain the call for renunciation which meets us continually in the gospel of Jesus? It was rooted, we can hardly doubt, in His view of the Kingdom as the new order, in which the

existing conditions would be transformed or altogether abolished. If men were looking for an inheritance in the future age, they must detach themselves entirely from the present and the claims by which it held them. Earthly possessions, domestic ties, worldly interests and activities were soon to be done away; and it was necessary even now to regard them as if they were not. Jesus laid no ascetic restrictions upon His followers. He passed no judgment on the intrinsic good or evil of wealth and marriage and secular avocations. What He insisted on was merely that these things were bound up with the present order, and were therefore hindrances and entanglements. His disciples were to throw in their lot with the coming Kingdom, and were to free themselves from all else, that they might embrace it.

This demand for renunciation seems to have little in common with the ethical demand, and yet is related to it in the closest manner. The Kingdom, as Jesus conceived it, was to involve a complete change—alike in the outward and in the spiritual conditions of the world. Before men could hope to enter it they must be ready to adjust themselves, on all sides of their nature, to the new conditions. They must "become as little children"—submitting their whole will and disposition to a process of renewal. They must be freed, likewise, from all external things that might keep them in bondage to

this age. A future lies before them in which they will enter into new relations, and find new interests and satisfactions awaiting them; and so long as they have their treasures on earth they cannot inherit it. The "repentance" by which they prepare themselves for the Kingdom must, therefore, consist both of an inward and an outward surrender. A new order is about to dawn; and those who would participate in it must have broken entirely with the old.

When we bear in mind these two ideas which are both implied in the demand for repentance, we discover a clue to one of the most serious problems in the thought of Jesus. It might appear as if His teaching fell abruptly into two sections which cannot be reconciled. On the one hand, He proclaimed a new morality—the loftiest and most satisfying that the world has known. In His two great commandments of love to God and love to man, in His substitution of the purified will for all outward laws and ordinances, we recognise the absolute morality. It is independent of all historical accidents, and possesses for men to-day the same meaning and authority as at the first. Yet on the other hand, Jesus held to conceptions which can only be understood in the light of contemporary Jewish belief. He looked for the immediate coming of a new age, in which disease and sorrow would disappear, human relations would change their character, the whole

constitution of nature and society would be transformed. Like the apocalyptic writers, He expected this new age to be introduced suddenly and supernaturally, with an accompaniment of wars and earthquakes and signs in heaven. The combination in the same message of two strains of thought so different may well seem inexplicable; and in most presentations of the teaching of Jesus one or other of them is kept out of sight. Sometimes an exclusive prominence is assigned to the apocalyptic element. It is maintained that the essential interest of Jesus was in the eschatological idea of the Kingdom of God, and that His ethic was something secondary and incidental. More frequently, the emphasis is laid solely on the ethical teaching. The conception of the Kingdom is explained in some purely spiritual sense or is treated as the imaginative setting of moral and religious ideas. But without entirely rejecting the evidence of the Gospels, we cannot thus obliterate the apparent contradiction in our Lord's thought. The ethical and the apocalyptic factors have both an integral place in His message. He appears to blend them together, and to pass over in the same sentence from one to the other, without any sense of their radical inconsistency.

The problem is a difficult, but it need not be regarded as an insoluble, one. There is a true relation between the ethical and the eschatological sides of Jesus' teaching; and the ethic is no less absolutely

valid because it is bound up with the current eschatology. Jesus, it must be remembered, was not an abstract thinker, who arrived at His conception of the new righteousness by some process of philosophical analysis. He had before Him, rather, the concrete picture of a higher order, presently to be realised, in which all things would be brought into correspondence with the will of God. He asked Himself what would be the nature of the moral life under those new conditions. What manner of men would God deem worthy to inherit His Kingdom? From what motives would they serve Him? In what relation would they stand to Him and to one another? To the mind of Jesus the higher spiritual interest was always primary; and when He thought of the coming age He concerned Himself little with the outward transformation of which we hear so much in the Apocalypses. He looked almost exclusively to the new moral life and the closer communion with God, which would be realised under the more perfect conditions. None the less, it was the apocalyptic hope that supplied the basis and framework for His spiritual teaching. He was able to conceive of an ideal morality because He was filled with the vision of an ideal world—a Kingdom of God, in which God's will would prevail. His eschatology, therefore, does not need to be interpreted in some forced allegorical sense, or thrust to one side, as utterly foreign to His real message. It belongs, undoubtedly, to the world of Jewish

tradition in which He lived and thought, and possesses in itself no permanent validity. But His higher religious teaching required some support around which it could grow and entwine itself; and this it found in the current anticipation of the Kingdom of God. A certain analogy may be traced in the example of Plato, who employs the idea of a perfect state as the necessary background for his speculations on the true morality and the problems of man's being and destiny. The analogy is only a partial one; for the Republic of Plato is a fanciful creation of his own, while Jesus believed in the Kingdom as the one grand fact of the immediate future. But in both cases we can discern the working of the same process of thought. The higher law could not be apprehended and set forth in some mere abstract fashion. Only by projecting himself into a world of ideal conditions could the teacher endeavour to realise the true purpose and will of God.

Thus the moral teaching of Jesus, when we seek to integrate it with His message as a whole, was only the other side, or rather the inward content of His eschatology; and here a question arises which has become prominent in recent discussion. Did Jesus claim for His ethic an absolute or a merely temporary validity? There might seem at first sight to be only one possible answer; but it has been argued that His morality, by its very nature, cannot have been meant

for more than an "interim" period.[1] The Kingdom was yet to come; and the rules of conduct which He imposed could not have an application beyond the short period which must elapse, prior to its commencement. Obedience to them would ensure an entrance into the Kingdom, but when it arrived they would carry no further authority. It must be granted that to a certain extent this view is rendered necessary by the facts. Jesus undoubtedly assumed that many of the conditions for which He legislated would have no existence in the future age. The bonds of family and society, as we know them now, would shortly be dissolved. The evils and oppressions which call for the exercise of patience, faith, forgiveness, would prevail no longer. It would be easy to review the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, one by one, and show that they would be meaningless in a perfect world, such as Jesus contemplated in the near future. Yet to regard His ethic as no more than an "interim morality" is certainly to misconstrue its whole intention. It needs to be borne in mind that the separate rules and directions which He lays down do not constitute the essence of His teaching. They all run back to the one ultimate demand of inward, spontaneous obedience to the will of God, and are designed to illustrate the working of this new

[1] Cf. Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede.* J. Weiss has maintained the same view in a more guarded form—especially in his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels in *Die Schriften des NTs.*

principle. They show how it may be observed in spirit, notwithstanding the untoward conditions of the present age. For example, Jesus has much to say about the duty of forgiveness and of returning good for evil—a duty which will cease to be necessary in the great future, when wrongs and injustices will disappear. It might well be argued that in this part of His teaching He can only have in view the intervening period. But when we look more deeply into the sayings in question, we become aware of their larger import. Behind the thought of bearing patiently with those who injure us there is that of attaining to a moral likeness to God. When the Kingdom comes, God's people will be "perfect" as He is, and the spirit of love will possess them wholly; but they can seek even now to live by it. They can carry it into all their intercourse with their fellow-men—in spite of the wickedness and ingratitude which make the exercise of the loving will so difficult. The aim of Jesus, therefore, was not to prescribe rules for a mere interval of waiting, but to declare the moral law as it would hold good for the Kingdom. He taught men how they might strive already after the new righteousness, and thus bring themselves into inward harmony with the Kingdom, although it had not yet come.

That Jesus regarded His ethic as absolutely valid is made apparent by more than one explicit saying. As He thinks of the impending catastrophe which will

put an end to the whole present order, He is confident that the truth proclaimed by Him will remain unshaken. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."[1] Still more explicit are the closing verses of the Sermon on the Mount. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not; because it was founded upon a rock."[2] But apart from these definite sayings which describe the new righteousness as eternal—as the one sure rock that will withstand the coming storm—the thought is involved in Jesus' favourite conception of the Kingdom as the reward for present obedience.[3] It is apparent when we examine this side of His teaching carefully, that the idea of reward is not to be taken in a narrow and literal sense. The future blessedness is not merely a prize or a compensation. All suggestion of merit is directly excluded by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, which makes it clear that no performance on the part of man can be regarded as a claim on God. By His allusions to the "reward," Jesus seeks, rather, to affirm that the inheritance of the future is dependent on a service already begun, and is its natural consequence and outcome. The true disciple is even now laying up

[1] Mk 13^{31} = Mt 24^{35} Lk 21^{33}. [2] Mt $7^{24f.}$ = Lk 6^{48}.
[3] Mt 20 $^{1-7}$, Mt $6^{1,}$ 6^{20}, Mk 10^{28}, etc.

treasures in heaven. His life is on the way towards a larger fulfilment, while that of the self-seeking Pharisees is complete already—"they have received their reward." Elsewhere, the reward is identified in so many words with the "eternal life" on which the righteous will enter in the coming age.[1] It is implied that faithful discipleship carries with it the promise of this truer life, and is, in some manner, the commencement of it. The future will only fulfil and manifest what has begun in the present.

So far, therefore, from assigning a mere "interim" value to His ethic, Jesus set it forth as the law of the coming Kingdom; and contrasted it in this sense with the commandments that had been given to "them of old time." These commandments had indeed come from God; but they were adapted to a world imperfectly constituted, and to the "hardness of men's hearts." They embodied the Divine will only in part, and made appeal to those lower motives whereby men were influenced in the present age. In place of this law which was soon to lose its authority, Jesus declared the righteousness of the Kingdom. He claimed that in virtue of a unique relation to God, He possessed an unerring insight into God's mind and purpose.[2] He could discern already the nature of that new rule of life which alone would have meaning in the great future; and His appointed task was to reveal it and teach men how to observe it.

[1] Mk $10^{17f.}$ 10^{30}, Mk 25^{26}, etc. [2] Mt 11^{27}=Lk 10^{22}.

Ordering their lives in the present by the principles of the higher law, they would be inwardly conformed to the Kingdom. They would secure their entrance into it because they were already, in will and character, the children of the coming age.

Jesus devoted Himself, then, to the work of preparation. He warned men that the Kingdom was near, and sought to effect in them the "change of mind" which would make them ready to welcome it. He sought, moreover, to impart to them a new moral law, which was nothing else than the law of the Kingdom. But we have now to consider whether His work was not, in a more definite sense, one of preparation. Did He come forward merely as the herald of the Kingdom, or did He believe that its advent was in some manner conditioned by His own ministry? We are here confronted by a question of profound interest and importance; and it has a bearing not only on the life of Jesus, but on the whole purpose of His religion.

In attempting to answer it, we may do well to take as our starting-point an episode which is narrated at length by all three Synoptists, and which they evidently regarded as cardinal to the history. They tell that shortly after the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus sent forth His disciples by two and two, with a commission to preach His message of repentance and confirm it by works of miracle, similar

to His own.[1] This mission of the Twelve is supplemented, in Luke's narrative, by another, to which seventy were appointed; but the second mission can hardly be taken as historical. It suggests too plainly the conditions of a subsequent age, when evangelists had their place in the work of the Church along with Apostles. In this Lucan episode—adapted for the most part from Mark's account of the delegation of the Twelve—we do, indeed, find one saying which is so characteristic in its vivid imagery that we cannot but accept it as genuine. ("I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.") But the saying is not in itself sufficient to guarantee the context; and in view of the obvious repetitions and borrowings we must look on the narrative with suspicion. Luke appears simply to have duplicated the story of the sending forth of the Twelve, and to have distributed over the two incidents the words of the original commission.[2]

With regard to this commission itself, we must allow for striking variations in the reports that have come down to us. That of Matthew is by far the longest, but it bears evident traces of a composite origin. Matthew has availed himself of the historical incident in order to group together, in the manner peculiar to his Gospel, a number of scattered sayings. He weaves into a single discourse the instructions and admonitions which Jesus may have given at different times to His disciples; while other directions are

[1] Mk $6^{7ff.}$ = Mt $10^{5ff.}$, Lk $9^{1ff.}$. [2] Lk 10^{1}.

added in which we can detect the influence of later ecclesiastical theory. The commission of Jesus to the Twelve is elaborated into a sort of manual for the guidance of all Christian evangelists. Matthew, however, has preserved to us one highly significant passage which is omitted from the simpler and more intelligible record of Mark, and which yet belongs undoubtedly to the authentic tradition. This is the passage which excludes "Gentiles and Samaritans" from the scope of the mission and limits it to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[1] A special interest attaches itself in this connection to the emphatic verse, "Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come."[2] Mark and Luke have eliminated this prophecy, apparently disproved by the event; and Matthew himself introduces it awkwardly, in a manner which shows that he was perplexed by it. The saying is indeed one of the most difficult in the Gospels;[3] and in our ignorance of the precise circumstances in which it was spoken we must be careful not to press it too literally. Jesus does not necessarily assert that the Kingdom was to come within the few days or weeks required by the disciples for their mission. His object—so far as we have any means of judging it—is simply to urge upon them the imperative need

[1] Mt $10^{5.6}$. [2] Mt 10^{23}.

[3] The difficulty involved in the use of the title "Son of man" will fall to be discussed later (*v.* p. 175).

for haste. They were to feel that the great consummation was in some way dependent on their work; and under the spur of this conviction they were to travel without rest from city to city. The more speedily they overtook their mission, the sooner would the Kingdom arrive.

Several facts, then, would seem to stand out clearly amidst the various obscurities of the episode. Jesus sent forth His disciples to convey His message to a wider audience than He Himself was able to reach. They were to proclaim to the whole Jewish people within the bounds of Palestine that the Kingdom was near, and were to confirm their proclamation by miraculous signs, which showed that the powers of the new age were already operative. He bade them pursue their task under an ever-present sense of its urgency. No time was allowed them for any appeal to the Gentiles or for a detailed propaganda—a "going from house to house" among the Jews. They were required to concentrate their efforts—addressing themselves to the general mass of the one nation, and finishing their work in the briefest possible time.

All the circumstances suggest that the disciples were sent out on their hasty errand for one specific purpose. Their function was not so much to evangelise the people as to excite them to hope and enthusiasm. For centuries the thought of the Kingdom had been little more than a pious dream; and while John the Baptist had given a new meaning

to it, his influence had been limited in its range and effects. Jesus desired to rouse the whole nation, and to rouse it, as far as possible, simultaneously. For this reason He enjoined on His disciples the necessity of haste. The announcement that the Kingdom was at hand was to flash out over all the cities of Israel, uniting the people everywhere in a mood of eager expectancy. As they listened to the hurrying messengers and witnessed the powers that wrought in them, they were to know that the Kingdom, so long hoped for, was indeed within reach of fulfilment. The prayer for it was to rise, not as heretofore from only a few devoted hearts. All Israel together was to wait on God, in the sure confidence that He would now fulfil His promise.

What was the purpose in the mind of Jesus when He set Himself to awaken this simultaneous enthusiasm? He cannot have intended to kindle an excitement for its own sake; neither can He have looked for some great moral result from a mere ardour of the moment. Only one motive seems adequate to explain His action. He believed that God might be willing to anticipate His purpose, in answer to the fervent prayer of His people. If they could be stirred even for a little time to a universal hope and longing for the Kingdom, they might have power to hasten its coming. That Jesus may well have cherished such an expectation is more than probable when we consider that it

occasionally finds utterance even in the Jewish writings. It is there recognised that the date of the Kingdom is not absolutely fixed, but depends on a sufficient performance on the part of the nation. A Rabbinical writer declares that if all Israel together would only repent for a single day, the redemption would be vouchsafed almost immediately.[1] The Apocalypse of Baruch accounts for the calamities of Israel as designed by God "in order that He might the more speedily visit the world."[2] In all the speculations on the time of the future deliverance, the possibility is left open of a "shortening of the days," as the Divine response to the prayer and repentance of Israel.[3] And this, we may conjecture, was the real purpose of that mission, otherwise so inexplicable, on which Jesus sent out His disciples. It was intended not merely to assure all Israel of the imminent approach of the Kingdom, but to hasten its coming. The whole nation together was to turn to God, with a prayer and desire that should be irresistible; and He would "shorten the days."

It might be argued that such a hope was precluded by the very nature of Jesus' conception of the Kingdom. To His mind it was always the "Kingdom of God"—the new order that would

[1] Pesikta 163[b]. [2] Bar 20.

[3] For a discussion of this side of Jewish speculation, see Rabinsohn, *Le Messianisme dans le Talmud et les Midrashim*, 58 ff.

be established by God directly, apart from all human agency. This view is emphasised in such a parable as that of the seed growing of itself, where the one thought is that man must stand aside and allow God to accomplish His purpose. The attitude of Jesus throughout is one of implicit trust in God, to whose wisdom and providence He leaves the ordering of all things. He seems to affirm repeatedly, in so many words, that man's relation to the Kingdom can be no other than that of passive waiting. None the less, as we read the Gospels attentively, we cannot fail to be impressed with a different element in our Lord's thought. The subject is so important, in its bearing on the question before us, that it calls for some consideration in detail.

We are arrested, in the first place, by the presence in the Gospel history of a whole series of incidents, in which Jesus bestows emphatic praise on those who have forced themselves on His help by some aggressive action. He recognises in them the religious temper which He was seeking to awaken in men, and which was the necessary condition of all Divine benefits. The paralytic at Capernaum, the Syrophœnician woman, Zacchaeus, the blind man by the wayside—did not wait passively until Jesus should take knowledge of them, but obtruded themselves upon Him and compelled His action. He welcomed this importunity. He

was willing that His gift should be wrested from Him prematurely, and discerned, in the eagerness which had anticipated the due time, a spirit of faith. This, indeed, appears to be His one test of faith—that it is not content with mere waiting, but insists on its demand until it receives an answer. His attitude becomes the more suggestive when we remember the significance which He attached to His works of healing. He thought of Himself as only the instrument of a miraculous power which God was exercising through Him; and the constraining faith of which He was the immediate object was directed in the last resort to God. By His welcome of it He implied that God Himself accepted it, and would refuse nothing to an insistent faith.

This aspect of the thought of Jesus can be seen even more clearly in His explicit sayings on the power of prayer. Prayer, as He conceives it, is much more than a waiting on God, in passive self-surrender to His inevitable will. The prayer of faith will ensure its own fulfilment. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."[1] The will of God is not wholly fixed and unalterable. It is the will of our Father, who is awake to our needs and longings, and who desires that we should plead with Him and prevail. By granting us access to

[1] Mt 7^{7} = Lk 11^{9}.

Himself in prayer, He has given us control over the mightiest of all powers. We have the right to use this power, and to win for ourselves the interposition of God even when He seems most unwilling. Jesus Himself was strong through prayer. He believed that by means of it He had the might of God to support Him; and He sought to impart His own assurance to His disciples. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."[1]

The prayer of faith carries with it an incalculable power; and in certain passages the Kingdom is set before us as the chief object of prayer. The Lord's Prayer itself centres in the petition, "Thy Kingdom come." It is difficult to understand why Jesus should have required His disciples to offer this prayer, if He believed that the date of the Kingdom was unalterably fixed, and that nothing remained for men but to stand by and wait. The one aim of the petition—and this is true likewise of the Lord's Prayer as a whole—is to bring the power of faith to bear on the Divine purpose. A similar idea is expressed in the two remarkable parables of the importunate widow and the traveller at midnight. There are indications that these parables, in their original form, had reference not so much to prayer

[1] Mt 17^{20} = Lk 17^{6}.

in general as to specific prayer for the coming of the Kingdom.[1] They testify to the belief of Jesus that God was willing to be importuned for the fulfilment of His great purpose. By crying unto Him night and day, by knocking at the door though it seemed barred against them, men had it in their power to move His will and shorten the interval of waiting.

There is one passage—admittedly a very difficult one—which in our view sums up in a definite statement this important side of Jesus' teaching. In the discourse which followed the departure of John's embassy, He spoke the words which are thus reported by Matthew: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."[2] There can be little doubt that Matthew has preserved the saying in a more authentic form than Luke.[3] In the Lucan parallel the characteristic image disappears and is replaced by a matter-of-fact assertion. Luke, it is evident, was perplexed by the saying as all interpreters have been since, and preferred to render it in a paraphrase of what he conceived to be its meaning. This fact in itself is valuable as an incidental proof of the genuineness of the saying. To the second generation it had already become unintelligible, and could never

[1] Cf. Lk $18^{7.8}$. [2] Mt $11^{12.13}$. [3] Lk 16^{16}.

have found its way into the Gospels unless it had formed an inalienable part of the very earliest tradition.

Before attempting an explanation of the passage, it is necessary to take account of several preliminary difficulties. (1) The word *βιάζεται* may be translated with equal correctness in a neutral or a passive sense ("breaks in" or "is forced"). The former version would undoubtedly simplify the thought, and has commended itself to many scholars;[1] but in view of the clause that follows it seems inadmissible. A parallelism is obviously intended, and is destroyed unless we accept the usual translation. The idea involved in *ἁρπάζουσι* has likewise to be noted. This word does not denote "force an entrance" (as into a besieged city), but "seize hold of," "carry off as plunder." It suggests the picture of a prize just coming within reach, which the bolder spirits immediately capture, without waiting for a signal. (2) The saying which appears in Matthew as part of a long passage is isolated by Luke. He reserves it for a later place in his Gospel,[2] although otherwise he gives the discourse on John the Baptist in substantially its Matthæan form. It may be inferred that Matthew, in his usual manner, has linked together several kindred utterances, while Luke keeps them separate, as he found them in

[1] Recently to Harnack, *Zwei Worte Jesu.* [2] Lk 16^{16}.

his source. (3) Luke varies from Matthew in the order which he assigns to the two parts of the saying. His version runs: "The law and the prophets were until John; but now the Kingdom of God is preached and all men press into it." The larger mass of critical opinion would here give the preference to Matthew; but on grounds which seem insufficient. Matthew, as we have seen, is anxious to bring the saying into a group, and to connect it on the one hand with the preceding discourse, and on the other hand with the closing statement, "This is Elias." Luke has no such literary motive for inverting the order of the sentences, and may be assumed to have reproduced it as he found it. We may, therefore, conclude that the original saying was in terms such as these: "The law and the prophets were until John; since then, the Kingdom of God is taken forcibly, and the violent drag it towards them." John, that is to say, had marked the beginning of a new era. In former times the Kingdom had been merely prophesied and foreshadowed; now it had come so near that men could hasten their possession of it, by a strong effort of their own.

According to a view which has recently found powerful advocates,[1] Jesus could never have intended His words to bear such a meaning. He thought of the Kingdom as coming at the appointed time, by

[1] Notably J. Weiss and Bousset.

the sole act of God; and the idea that men could in any sense compel it would have seemed to Him nothing less than blasphemous. It is maintained, therefore, that the words must have been spoken in a kind of indignant irony. The agitation which was finally to culminate in the great revolt had obtained a new impulse from the preaching of John the Baptist, and Jesus took occasion to warn the people against vain and unholy attempts to enforce the Kingdom of God. It would not come by compulsion: not the violent, but those who waited patiently for God would possess it in due time. To this interpretation, however, there are several objections that at once suggest themselves. (1) No indication is offered us that the saying was spoken in irony or by way of rebuke. (2) The political agitation had begun long before John's appearance, and he did nothing, so far as we can gather, to encourage it. (3) The uniform attitude of Jesus to John was one of respect and admiration; and we cannot believe that He charged His predecessor with initiating a mistaken movement.

We hold, therefore, that the saying connects itself most naturally with that aspect of the teaching of Jesus which we have just considered. Acknowledging though He did that the Kingdom would come suddenly and mysteriously by the will of God alone, He yet believed that men could in some degree compel the Divine will. He saw in faith an inestimable power,

which would prevail with God Himself; and His aim was to arouse the people to a supreme effort of faith. They were no longer to wait for the Kingdom, but to hasten it by their own endeavour. Since the days of John the Baptist it had ceased to be a dim object of prophetic vision, and had come almost within reach. Its powers were manifesting themselves in works of miracle; the nature of its new righteousness could be plainly apprehended. The great day had drawn so near that a strong and united prayer to God might break down the remaining barriers. Men might "take the Kingdom by force"—might "drag it towards them," and see its realisation almost at once.

Here, then, we would discern a vital element in the work of Jesus, and one which distinguished it, in its very essence, from that of John the Baptist. John had been only a prophet and herald. The task he undertook was to announce the Kingdom—warning men to be ready for it and so wait patiently till it arrived. Jesus believed that the Kingdom could be brought nearer. He aimed at awakening men to such an effort that they should themselves help the plan of God to its fulfilment. Hence the duty which He laid on His disciples was not that of passive waiting, but that of "seeking" the Kingdom. By hungering and thirsting after it, by lifting their hearts to it with an invincible faith and desire, they were

to hasten the day of its coming. Jesus sought to create this mood of seeking, not only in His own disciples, but also—if our interpretation is correct—in the whole nation. He conceived it to be possible, by uniting all Israel at once in an enthusiastic hope for the Kingdom, to compel its immediate advent. Such an intention on the part of Jesus was in no way incompatible with His belief that the Kingdom was to come directly from God, without any human co-operation. He did not claim that men had themselves the power to bring in the Kingdom, or to determine the form or manner in which it would appear. As against the Zealots, with their reliance on political agitation, He was in sympathy with the Pharisees, who left the future deliverance solely to the good pleasure of God. But although He thus looked for a supernatural coming of the Kingdom, He required that men should do their part. While trusting in God alone to accomplish His purpose, they could wait upon Him with fervent desire and longing. They could wrestle with Him in the power of faith till they prevailed on His will. God Himself was willing to be thus entreated. He desired as His servants "men of violence"—so earnest in their passion for His Kingdom that they sought to compel its coming, before the appointed time.

The Christian Church from the beginning has construed the message of Jesus as a summons to activity.

He spoke of a Kingdom which God would bring to pass by His own creative act; but the Church has felt the obligation laid upon it of assisting the work of God. By making disciples of all nations, by righting the world's injustices and conforming all human institutions to the law of Christ, it has endeavoured to realise, in ever larger measure, that new age which He foretold. It may be argued that this attempt to fulfil the Kingdom through the faith and labour of Christian men can find no sanction in the teaching of Jesus. His own hope for the world's future fell to the ground, and was replaced by another, with which it had nothing in common. But when we look deeper, we can recognise that it was Jesus Himself who inspired the activities of His Church. While He conceived of the Kingdom as the direct gift of God, He declared that men, by their own effort, might bring it nearer. In His own life He gave the example of an all-conquering faith, and sought to awaken a like faith in His people. Waiting on God, they were also to work with Him for the hastening of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RELATION OF JESUS TO THE KINGDOM.

Jesus began His work in Galilee as the messenger of the Kingdom of God. He testified by acts of power that the Kingdom was close at hand, and sought to effect in men the "change of mind" which would make them worthy to receive it. If we have rightly interpreted one outstanding feature of His teaching, He cherished the further purpose of arousing His countrymen to an enthusiastic faith, which would prevail on God to hasten the deliverance. But thus far we have found little to suggest that He Himself bore a peculiar relation to the Kingdom and was necessary to its fulfilment. On a superficial view He may seem to have claimed for Himself an even less authoritative commission than John, who not only taught, but baptized, in the apparent conviction that his baptism would avail for men at the coming Judgment.

To the people generally Jesus appeared in the light of a prophet, who had come forward like John the Baptist to declare a new way of righteousness.

There were some who ventured the surmise that He was not a prophet merely, but Elijah, or some other of the great figures of the past who were to come to life again in the latter days.[1] If we accept a series of Matthæan passages,[2] He was acknowledged by many as the promised Son of David; but these passages, which have little support in the other Gospels, must be taken with reserve. In any case, the judgment expressed in them was the result of a momentary excitement, and did not reflect the deliberate popular view. The new Teacher, according to that view, was simply a prophet, like His forerunner. On the very eve of His death the multitude in Jerusalem hailed Him as "Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee."[3] The Pharisees hesitated to arrest Him, not because He was regarded as Elijah or the Son of David, but "because the people took Him for a prophet."[4] So strongly had this opinion impressed itself that it persisted after His death, even among those who had now recognised Him as the Messiah.[5]

Jesus seems to have acquiesced in the title thus bestowed on Him by the people. "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country."[6] "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."[7] In such sayings He evidently applies to Himself the

[1] Mk 6^{14} = Lk 9^{7}.
[2] Mt 9^{27-31} 13^{23} 15^{22} 20^{30} $21^{9.\ 15}$.
[3] Mt 21^{11}.
[4] Mt 21^{46}.
[5] Cf. Lk 24^{19}, Ac 3^{22} 7^{37}.
[6] Mk 6^{4}.
[7] Lk 13^{3}.

name of prophet; but He was content to assume it in its broadest and most general sense. He made no attempt, like His predecessor, to re-enact the specific part of an Old Testament prophet. His method of teaching was that of the contemporary Rabbis, though simpler and more popular; and He affected no imitation of prophetic language or dress or behaviour. The manner in which He understood His vocation as prophet is best illustrated by His reference to Himself of the words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[1] He was a prophet in so far as He shared with the ancient prophets their consciousness of a Divine calling; but He pursued His own way, and refused to bind Himself by any tradition.

This freedom of Jesus in regard to the form of His ministry is itself remarkable. It suggests that from the beginning He was aware of something in His own personality which gave weight to His message. He did not require, like previous teachers, to shelter Himself behind some consecrated name or office, for by an inherent right He had taken up His task of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The attitude of Jesus is everywhere marked by this lofty sense of

[1] Lk $4^{18f.}$.

His own personality; and His belief in Himself is the more impressive because He makes no studied effort to assert it. As He assumed no formal title, so He affected no singularity to render Himself conspicuous. He "came eating and drinking." He mingled with men in their common interests, and taught by the wayside and in ordinary places of resort. Nevertheless, the knowledge that He was different from other men revealed itself in all His speech and action; and the people felt, as they listened to Him, that He spoke with authority. He confronted the laws of Moses with His "I say unto you." He summoned His disciples to Him by a bare word, as having an unquestioned title to their obedience. The miracles themselves, in so far as they are capable of explanation, were due to the influence exercised on others by a naturally sovereign personality. Whatever value we attach to them, the fact is profoundly significant that Jesus believed that He could work miracles. He was conscious at all times of an inborn power and ascendency, to which nothing seemed impossible.

In the last resort, therefore, the claim of Jesus to a peculiar dignity was not founded on any theory of His vocation. It was the instinctive assertion of a royalty of nature which was His from the beginning. By a right which He could neither explain nor question, He took His place as Master, and opposed

His own commandments to the beliefs and traditions of the past. This sense of a special prerogative residing in Himself was something apart from His doctrine of the Kingdom; but it came inevitably to be blended with it. He could not but feel that the authority of which He was conscious was in some way related to that Divine purpose which was now on the point of fulfilment. The conviction which thus grew up in Him had its ultimate issue in His claim to Messiahship. But we have indications that before He finally announced Himself as the Messiah He had learned to associate His own personality with the coming of the Kingdom.

(1) He was confident, in the first place, that the powers of the Kingdom had begun to manifest themselves through Him. A commission had been given Him to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to effect a renewal in the minds and hearts of men. He did not, indeed, regard His miracles as evidence of a supernatural quality attaching to Himself. They were the signs of the breaking in of the Kingdom, and He pointed to them as the guarantee, not of His own claims, but simply of the higher power which was now active. He rejoiced to think that His disciples also could work miracles; for He saw proof, in this wider diffusion of the power, that the Kingdom was drawing ever nearer. None the less, He was fully conscious that the new influences had first become operative through Himself. It was through

Him that "authority had been given unto men," enabling them to participate even now in the benefits of the new age. The miracle-working power could not thus have originated in Himself, unless He bore some peculiar relation to the Kingdom. He had been chosen out from all others as its harbinger and representative. Its coming was mysteriously bound up, in the Divine counsel, with His personal destiny.

(2) He was conscious of a power, not only to work miracles, but to forgive sins; and it is evident, from more than one incident in the Gospels, that the two powers were regarded by Him as closely allied with one another.[1] They were both prophetic of the near approach of the Kingdom, in which men were to be liberated from all the evils, moral as well as physical, which had burdened them in the past. In Old Testament Scripture the forgiveness of sins is one of the constant features of the promised deliverance. As God will restore His people to glory and prosperity and renovate the world they dwell in, so He will grant them a full pardon for all their transgressions. We can hardly doubt that these Old Testament anticipations had their influence on the thought of Jesus. He forgave sins, not on the ground of any theory, but as a holy and sovereign nature, mediating to His fellow-men the love and compassion of God. But He could not possess this moral authority without reflect-

[1] Mk 2^9 = Mt 9^5, Lk 5^{23}, Lk 7^{48}.

ing on the nature and meaning of it; and He found the explanation in the Old Testament prophecies. Forgiveness was one of the destined blessings of the Kingdom. It was being imparted to men in the present as a foretaste and assurance of the new conditions that were shortly to be realised. And if He Himself had been invested by God with the right to forgive sins, it could only be because He stood, in some unique manner, for the Kingdom. It must have drawn near to men in His Person, on the eve of its final manifestation.

(3) The ethical teaching of Jesus, as we have tried to show, was intimately connected with His eschatology. It was no mere development or interpretation of the accepted morality, but was different from it in root and principle. What Jesus proclaimed was nothing less than the "new righteousness"—the law which was to prevail hereafter in the Kingdom of God. But how could He explain to Himself His sure conviction that this higher law had been revealed to Him, and to Him alone? He could only explain it on the assumption that He already belonged to the Kingdom—that it was manifesting itself through Him in the present age. Not only, therefore, did He teach the "new righteousness," but He stood forth, in His own Person, as its example. He called the disciples "that they should be with him,"[1] and be moulded to a new life by His companionship. He bade men

[1] Mk 3^{14}.

come to Him and "learn of him." His summons to enter the Kingdom took the form of a personal invitation, "Follow me." Ever and again He declared that men's attitude to Him would determine their attitude to the Kingdom of God. They were to see in Him its living embodiment, and according as they welcomed or rejected Him they would be judged. Such an estimate of His own Person was impossible if Jesus thought of Himself as only prophet or herald. It rested on the belief, which became ever more certain as He considered the nature of His message, that He was in some way identified with the Kingdom.

(4) This belief had grown up in Him, above all, through His consciousness of a new and profound relation to God. He felt, by an immediate instinct which could admit of no analysis, that God was His Father, in a sense that could not be predicated of any other man. Here we arrive at the ultimate and inexplicable element in the life of Jesus. The evidence of it can be traced, with more or less clearness, through all His recorded teaching; but in one great passage it comes to definite expression.[1]

The passage has suffered at the hands of interpreters by its apparent resemblance to various sayings in the Fourth Gospel. Either it has been rejected altogether, as a later theological addition, or it has been explained in the light of Johannine thought,

[1] Mt 11^{25-30} = Lk $10^{21, 22}$.

and so isolated from the Synoptic teaching as a whole. But the correspondences with the Fourth Gospel are more superficial than real. They practically disappear, and with them most of the graver difficulties which beset the passage, when we subject it to a careful exegesis. (*a*) The words, "all things are delivered unto me" (*πάντα μοι παρεδόθη*), do not refer to cosmical power, but to religious knowledge and insight. Jesus has been speaking, in the previous verse, of the Rabbinical teachers, whose claim to wisdom was based on their acquaintance with the *παράδοσις* or sacred "tradition." He makes use of their technical term in order to point the difference between Himself and them. His "tradition" has come to Him from His Father. He is no transmitter of doubtful knowledge, handed down from teacher to teacher, but has received an immediate message from God. (*b*) With this thought of the Divine origin of His teaching, the words that follow are closely connected; and it seems more than probable that they should be read in the past tense instead of the present (*ἔγνω* for *γινώσκει*).[1] Jesus does not allude to a timeless knowledge, inherent in Him now as from all eternity, but contrasts Himself with the teachers who had gone before Him. The "tradition," even at its fountain-head, had been only a partial revelation; and it had been corrupted in its passing down through

[1] The early patristic quotations of the verse seem all to assume this reading.

many intermediaries. Now for the first time God had been truly known, in a direct and personal fellowship. (*c*) The clause, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father," may be set down, almost certainly, as a later interpolation. In early quotations and manuscripts alike it is frequently placed second, in a sort of awkward parenthesis; and we may infer from this doubt regarding its position that it was not an integral part of the original saying. A tendency was probably at work from an early time to assimilate the verse to the Johannine type of doctrine. "Knoweth" was substituted for "hath known," and the new clause was added, to bring out more clearly the theological implication.

When the passage is thus analysed, it falls into complete harmony with the thought of Jesus, as reflected in the Synoptic Gospels. He states no thesis concerning His nature or attributes, but simply declares that He can reveal God's will, because He stands in a filial relation to God. The idea of Sonship was better fitted than any other to describe that communion with God, uniquely close and dear, of which He was conscious. But may we not conjecture that He applied it to Himself in a more definite sense, suggested to Him by a well-marked series of prophecies? The anticipations of the future age are invariably summed up in the promise that when God redeems His people He will bring them into another and higher relation to Himself. "I will make a new

covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."[1] "It shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."[2] "For he shall take knowledge of them that they shall all be sons of their God."[3] Perhaps the name of "Father," as employed by Jesus, carries with it a reference to this prophetic idea. As He sought to interpret to Himself that new relation to God in which He stood, He may have seen in it the promised Sonship. A day was coming when God would be a Father to His people; but Jesus could feel that He had entered already into that closer fellowship with God. He had anticipated the crowning privilege of the future age.

From the outset of His ministry, therefore, Jesus was led to associate the Kingdom with His own Person and work. He was not merely the herald of the new order, but its representative. He revealed and exemplified its law; He exercised its powers; He enjoyed that communion with God in which its members would participate. So far as we can interpret the record, He did not at first construe His mission in terms of the Messianic speculations. His belief that He was the Messiah had its ground in the more general idea of His relation to the Kingdom. It was forced upon Him gradually as He pondered on that relation and sought to define it more adequately.

[1] Jer 31^{31}. [2] Hos 1^{10}; cf. 2 S $7^{8.14}$, Is 43^{6}.
[3] Pss-Sol 17^{27}; cf. Jub 1^{23-25}.

At this point, however, we have to reckon with the primitive tradition that He awoke to the knowledge of His Messiahship in the moment of His Baptism at the hands of John. One form of the tradition, which left its traces on various types of early church doctrine, regarded the Baptism as a solemn act of investiture. Jesus had hitherto been a man like others, but was now chosen out by God and set apart for the Messianic office. A suggestion of this view has been discovered by many in our Gospel narrative of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the simultaneous voice from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well-pleased."[1] But we may infer, more reasonably, that the later belief had itself its origin in a too literal interpretation of this narrative. The evangelists appear to contemplate at most a sudden crisis of self-recognition. Jesus was already dimly conscious of a great destiny in store for Him, when the truth was irresistibly borne in upon Him by a direct revelation. It is impossible to doubt that the story of the Baptism, however we may explain its pictorial details, is founded on an actual experience, which marked a turning-point in the inward life of Jesus. The experience was probably ecstatic in its nature, and may well have been accompanied by a vision.

What was the conviction that awoke in Jesus—crystallising itself suddenly in the moment of His Baptism, out of a multitude of vague surmises and pre-

[1] Mk $1^{10.\ 11}$ = Mt $3^{16.\ 17}$, Lk $3^{21.\ 22}$.

monitions? It is commonly assumed, in view of the incident of the Temptation immediately following, that the primitive conjecture is the true one. Jesus had attained to the knowledge of His Messiahship. In the solitary conflict which ensued He freed Himself from all lower conceptions of His Messianic office, and resolved on the one difficult path appointed Him by God. But this theory of the Temptation rests wholly on the account of Matthew and Luke, which has obviously been coloured by subsequent fancy and speculation. Mark records nothing but the fact of the retirement into the wilderness. He tells, indeed, of a Messianic Temptation, but it came at a later time, after the remonstrance of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi. When we examine more closely even into the narrative of Matthew and Luke, we can see that the struggle of Jesus does not turn so much on His Messiahship as on His willingness to serve God rather than the Prince of this world. He answers the Tempter in words from the Book of Deuteronomy, which have no connection with Messianic doctrine; and we can readily believe that in the opening period of His ministry, when His mind was occupied entirely with the coming Kingdom of God, He lived much in that book and in the region of thought suggested by it. It foreshadowed His own message of a promised land awaiting God's people, of a more inward interpretation of the Law, of a higher and closer fellowship of man with God.

We have no evidence, then, that it was the conviction of His Messiahship that broke on Jesus at His Baptism. The words addressed to Him by the heavenly voice ("Thou art my beloved Son") are to be taken rather in their wider significance. It was revealed to Jesus in a moment of ecstatic vision that He stood in a unique relation to God, who had called Him to a great work and had endowed Him with the power necessary to its fulfilment. In the Temptation which followed He won for Himself a clear assurance of this Sonship. He resolved to throw His life entirely on the will of God and to trust and serve Him as His Father. The reflection on His office, and on the course of action which it required of Him, came afterwards. He could not enter on His work for the Kingdom until He was certain, beyond all doubting, of His personal relation to God.

It was at Cæsarea Philippi, towards the close of His ministry, that Jesus made the first explicit avowal of His Messiahship. This is to be inferred, with little misgiving, not only from the position of the incident in the Marcan narrative, but from the details of the incident itself. Jesus is still ignorant that His disciples have thought of Him as the Messiah. He approaches the subject tentatively—seeking to discover whether they have guessed His secret while it was hidden from the multitude. He

implies, by His injunction of silence, that He is now divulging it for the first time.

It is important to observe that Mark and Luke narrate the incident in a much briefer and more intelligible form than Matthew. They simply record Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ," while Matthew adds the blessing on Peter, and the delegation to him of primacy in the Church. This Matthæan addition, whatever be its origin, cannot be accepted without the gravest reserve. It seems plainly to betray the influence, not only of later ecclesiastical theory, but of later theological doctrine.[1] The addition, moreover, introduces into the incident a new feature which essentially changes its character. There is no suggestion, in the parallel narratives, of joy on the part of Jesus over the confession of His disciple. His mood is rather one of gloomy presentiment. He is overwhelmed with a sense of the solemn import of the declaration; and proceeds immediately to foretell His sufferings and death.

But although the outburst of joy is foreign to the original narrative, there is no ground for concluding, with some writers, that Jesus was averse to the Messianic claim, which was put forward on His behalf by the disciples. It is true that He

[1] "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee," etc.; *i.e.* a Divine enlightenment had enabled Peter to discern the higher nature of Jesus. The idea seems to be analogous to that of the Fourth Gospel—"no man can come unto me except the Father draw him."

Himself made no direct affirmation. He received an answer from Peter, and did not declare, in so many words, whether it was right or wrong. But the answer was suggested by Himself. He had implied by His question that the popular estimates of Him, lofty as they were, had fallen short of the truth; and Peter could no longer hesitate to make his grand confession. It is indeed surprising that Jesus should first have advanced His claim indirectly, by the mouth of a disciple; but the clue to His motive may perhaps be discovered in the verses that follow. The fact of His Messiahship was only half of the secret which He had set Himself to communicate. He had revealed it by way of prelude to the further declaration, that His work as Messiah would be accomplished through suffering. Such a conception was utterly at variance with anything that had hitherto found a place in Messianic theory; and He knew that it would be repellent to His disciples and make His claim appear incredible. They needed, therefore, to realise that the belief in His Messiahship had not been merely thrust upon them by a bare assertion of His own. Before He had spoken, they had themselves acknowledged Him, on the constraining evidence of His life and work.

At Cæsarea Philippi, then, Jesus made a twofold declaration; and the two elements in it require to be taken together. He affirmed, on the one hand

that He was the Messiah, and on the other hand that in the pursuance of His Messianic calling He would suffer many things and be delivered over to death. The two truths were communicated at the same time; and from this as from other indications it seems apparent that they had grown up together in His mind. From the first He had known Himself to be a man apart. He was conscious of an authority entrusted to Him, of a peculiar relation to the future Kingdom, of a unique fellowship with God and insight into His will. But the conviction of His Messiahship did not fully awaken in Him until He foresaw the inevitable end of His mission. We shall return at a later stage to this vital connection, in the thought of Jesus, of the two ideas of suffering and Messiahship.

Meanwhile it is necessary to consider a further detail in the incident at Cæsarea Philippi, which holds such a crucial place in the history. Till then Jesus had forborne to declare Himself as the Messiah, even to His own disciples; and we are told that in the very act of making His declaration, He bound them to a strict silence.[1] According to the Marcan narrative, this secrecy was enjoined on them repeatedly, almost to the closing days. After each work of power which confirmed them in the belief that He was the Messiah, He

[1] Mk 8^{30} = Mt 16^{20}, Lk 9^{21}.

was careful to remind them that this belief must not be divulged to others. The impression is conveyed that while He advanced His claim with ever-increasing confidence in the circle of His own immediate followers, He had reasons for concealing it from the outside world.

The motives of Jesus in thus guarding His Messiahship as a secret have been variously explained, and the more important theories call for some examination. (1) It has been argued that the Messianic idea was originally foreign to His plan, and was gradually forced upon Him by the pressure of outward events.[1] He had hoped to achieve His purpose of winning Israel for the Kingdom of God by His activity as prophet and teacher; but when the people failed to respond to Him, when their initial enthusiasm gave place to apathy or open hostility, He yielded to the temptation which He had at first put away from Him. By identifying Himself with the popular hope, He sought to re-kindle the waning interest in His cause and force the nation to a decision. Some colour is given to this theory by the abrupt change of plan which we seem to encounter in the final period. Instead of concealing His Messianic dignity, or disclosing it under seal of secrecy to His personal followers, Jesus suddenly becomes anxious to assert it. He enters Jerusalem in circumstances

[1] Cf. A. Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*.

of studied publicity as the promised King, and assumes the right of ordering the worship of the Temple. But on closer analysis the theory may be set aside as fanciful and wholly inadequate. Even if we could reconcile the conduct attributed to Him with what we know of the character of Jesus, it is hard to understand what He could expect to gain by it. He must have been aware that by stirring up a Messianic agitation He would only court disaster. The Roman administration would at once take measures to crush Him, while His own countrymen would stand aloof, even more decidedly than before, from a leader who only pretended to fulfil their hopes. All that He could look for, as the result of an unworthy compromise, would be a day or two of hollow success, followed by utter ruin.

(2) More plausible reasons can be brought forward in support of the second theory—that He exercised a policy of reserve, in order to avoid a premature collision with the Roman authorities. Assured that He was the Messiah, and resolved eventually to declare Himself, He was yet awake to the suspicions to which a Messianic movement would be exposed. It was necessary if He was to bring His mission to any maturity, that its true character should be partially disguised. To the world at large He was content to appear simply as a Teacher sent from God, while all the time He was gradually preparing the

way for the disclosure of His higher claims. There is much that is attractive in this hypothesis;[1] and not a few facts in the history seem to fit in with it. In view of such an incident as that of the tribute-money, it is evident that Jesus knew the dangers of the delicate political situation, and that He was careful to guard against them. But it is difficult to believe that out of fear of possible consequences He concealed the essential fact of His mission;—in this respect the theory is hardly more satisfactory than that already noticed. It entirely fails, moreover, to explain His ultimate decision to declare Himself. The people were as unprepared as ever to acknowledge Him in His true character, yet He abruptly broke off His former line of action, and embraced the course that was certain to involve Him in premature danger.

(3) According to a third hypothesis, which has found wider acceptance than any of the others, Jesus perceived the inadequacy of the current Messianic idea, and would not adopt it until He had impressed it with a new meaning. He was indeed the Messiah, but not a national and political Messiah such as the people were looking for; and if He had disclosed Himself at the beginning, the purpose of His mission would have been fatally misunderstood. He required, in the first instance,

[1] It has been admirably presented by Professor D. S. Cairns in his book, *Christianity in the Modern World.*

to acquaint men with His own mind and personality, so that through knowledge of Him their thought of the Messiah might be radically transformed. The truth would be brought home to them, as to Elijah in the old time, that God does not reveal Himself by storm and earthquake, but in the still, small voice. It cannot be denied that this was indeed the result of the method employed by Jesus. He imbued His disciples with a new sense of the Messiah's character and vocation. Their remembrance of the Master, in His earthly life of love and service, was henceforth so interwoven with their Messianic beliefs, that the official and personal names were merged in the one name "Jesus Christ." But we need to distinguish between this consequence of the work of Jesus and His immediate intention. If He had desired to educate men to a truer conception of the Messiah, would He not have taught them in some explicit manner that the ordinary ideas were mistaken? Would He not have offered them at least a partial clue to the fact of His Messiahship, so that they might understand His life of service in its deeper significance? For that part, it was not till after His disclosure at Cæsarea Philippi that He began the process of educating His disciples. Hitherto they had shared the common expectations; and He imparted His secret to them as the necessary preliminary to His new doctrine of the Messiah. If He had wished to give another direction to the hopes

of the people generally, He would doubtless have followed a like method and declared Himself plainly from the first.

(4) A more drastic solution of the problem has been attempted of late years by a group of critics, of whom Wrede and Wellhausen may be regarded as the foremost representatives.[1] As the result of a searching examination into the Marcan record—to which alone he allows an independent value—Wrede concludes that Jesus Himself never professed to be the Messiah. This claim was first advanced on His behalf after His death, and was then read back into the authentic history. There still remained the difficulty, however, that Jesus Himself had kept silence; and to meet this difficulty the idea of the "Messianic secret" was promulgated in the church. It was assumed that Jesus Himself was aware of His Messiahship and disclosed Himself in this character to His personal followers. The fact of His dignity was placed beyond all doubt by His miraculous works, and was repeatedly admitted by the demons, who as creatures of the spiritual world possessed an occult knowledge. But all the more because His secret was constantly on the point of betraying itself, He was anxious to preserve it "until the Son of man should be risen from the dead."[2] His Messianic work could

[1] Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimniss*; Wellhausen, *Einleitung*; cf. also N. Schmidt, *The Prophet of Nazareth*.

[2] Mk 9^9.

not be apprehended in its true meaning except in the light of His Resurrection, and until then His disciples were forbidden to reveal Him. It must be conceded that Wrede, in his presentation of this theory, has called attention to several features of the record which previous investigators have been apt to neglect. He has shown that already when the earliest Gospel was written, the facts of the life of Jesus were beginning to be modified by theological speculation. He has shown, moreover, that Mark's insistence on the secrecy enjoined by Jesus is, in some measure, artificial. The command "not to make Him known" is at times introduced awkwardly and needlessly; and appears to belong to a scheme in the mind of the writer, rather than to the history itself. But there are different reasons, all more or less conclusive, which make the theory as a whole inadmissible. (*a*) We may fairly argue that Mark is endeavouring, not altogether successfully, to do justice to a genuine tradition. He is aware that Jesus' claim to Messiahship was only disclosed towards the end, and under conditions of reserve. But although this broad fact is within his knowledge, he is not in a position to illustrate in detail how the disclosure was gradually made. All that he can do is to employ a formula, which is not always apposite to the given circumstances, but which serves its purpose of reminding the reader from time to time that Jesus had not yet declared Himself. (*b*) It is quite incredible that the belief in

the Messiahship of Jesus should have grown up of its own accord, without any ground in His actual teaching. We know that immediately after His death His disciples recognised Him, with entire confidence, as the Messiah. They did so in spite of the ruin which had apparently overwhelmed His cause; and their continued belief in Him is inexplicable unless they took their stand on some declaration of His own, which could admit of no ambiguity. (*c*) The theory in question would require us to discard the Gospel record as wholly untrustworthy. Jesus' claim to Messiahship is not confined to a few isolated passages, which might easily be eliminated; but lies at the heart of the narrative, and is meant to constitute its whole significance.[1] This is true, not only of Mark, but of the collateral source to which we are chiefly indebted for our account of Jesus' teaching, and which there is good reason for assigning to a still earlier date than Mark. It is impossible to conceive that the Gospel tradition, in the two independent strands which have gone to compose it, was radically mistaken from the first. Such a conclusion would involve nothing less than the ruling out of all historical evidence. (*d*) The hypothesis finally makes shipwreck on certain definite facts of the history which belong to its very essence. By His entry into Jerusalem and His subsequent cleansing of the Temple, Jesus undoubtedly

[1] This is brought out in a striking and convincing manner by Professor Denney in his recent book, *Jesus and the Gospel*.

sought to declare that He was the Messiah. The saying brought in evidence against Him at the trial had probably the same import;[1] while the trial itself can hardly have turned on any other question than that of the Messiahship. In His confession before the high-priest—the authenticity of which there is no valid reason for doubting—Jesus asserted His claim in plain words. Above all, the inscription on the Cross must be accepted as one of the most certain data of the record; and it can be explained in no other sense than that Jesus had professed Himself to be the Messiah. This was the definite charge on the ground of which He was put to death.

We cannot, therefore, admit the contention that the Messianic claim was never made by Jesus, but was read back into the history at a subsequent time. His assertion of it was the outstanding fact of the later period of His life, and apart from it the closing series of events becomes wholly unintelligible. Yet it appears equally certain that until near the end He withheld His claim; and that even after His declaration to His own immediate followers He was anxious that the truth should be kept secret from the world at large. How are we to explain this apparent concealment, on the part of one whose whole ordinary action was so fearless and unreserved?

[1] It was the fixed Jewish belief that some day, in place of the earthly Temple, there would be an eternal Temple brought down from heaven by the Messiah. Cf. En $5^{3.4}$.

There seems to be one explanation, and only one, which is sufficient to cover all the facts. Jesus was silent concerning His Messiahship, not from any motives of reserve or policy, but simply because it was still a problem to His own mind. The belief that He might Himself be the expected Deliverer had broken upon Him gradually as He proclaimed the Kingdom and realised His personal relation to it. But He entertained it at first with misgiving, and was not wholly convinced of it except through an inward struggle. It continued to be strange to Him even when He found Himself unable to doubt it any longer. He spoke of it with hesitation to His disciples. He was unwilling that the secret should travel beyond them until He saw His course more plainly.

An incident is preserved to us in the Gospels which appears to reflect the mood of Jesus while He was still feeling His way towards the full conviction of His Messiahship. This is the memorable incident of John's embassy; and it took place, apparently, just a little time before the declaration at Cæsarea Philippi. John's sending of the embassy, as we have already had occasion to note,[1] was not the result of disillusionment, but of incipient faith. Rumours had come to him, as he lay in prison, of the new Teacher who was carrying his own work to yet higher issues; and the hope had awakened in him that this might be no other than the Greater One whom he had foretold. He could not rest

[1] P. 83.

till he had sent his messengers to receive an explicit answer from Jesus Himself. When we thus read the incident, the reply of Jesus at once assumes a new and significant meaning. He evades John's eager question, and points the messengers to the works of the Kingdom that were being wrought by Him. John is thus left to draw his own conclusions; but at the same time he is encouraged in his surmise by the parting words, "Blessed is he who is not offended in me." "I may not yet say"—thus we may interpret the words, "whether I am indeed the promised Messiah; but it is more than possible. Wait on in hope and patience and you will presently know." We may believe that the enigmatical answer gave a true expression to the feeling of Jesus at this time. He could not definitely assert His claim; for in His own mind He had not yet arrived at a perfectly clear decision. Yet He was Himself pondering the import of those wonderful works which He bade the messengers recount to John. They were the works of the Kingdom; and who could accomplish them except the Messiah through whom the Kingdom was to come? Still hesitating, but with an ever-growing confidence, He was awaiting some clear sign from God, which should resolve all doubts.

In what manner did Jesus finally arrive at the absolute certainty of His Messianic calling? To this question no conclusive answer is possible; but a partial light is thrown upon it by the sequel to the

incident at Cæsarea Philippi. Scarcely had He made the confession of His Messiahship when He announced to His disciples that "the Son of man must suffer many things"—fulfilling His vocation, not by an earthly triumph, but by death. It can hardly be doubted that this thought of His approaching death helped more and more to determine His final attitude. Not in spite of the apparent failure which threatened His mission, but somehow in consequence of it, He rose to the full assurance that He was Himself the Messiah. This is the great paradox which lies at the centre of the life of Jesus. Before attempting to discuss it we shall require to consider a whole series of difficult problems to which it is vitally related.

Thus far we have endeavoured to show that the Messianic claim of Jesus had its roots in His larger message of the Kingdom. His mind, at the first, was wholly occupied with that message; but as He proclaimed the Kingdom He could not but reflect on His own relation to it. His belief that He represented the new order assumed an ever more definite form, till He was compelled to recognise Himself as the Messiah. For a time, however, He shrank from any open declaration. The claim to Messiahship was so tremendous in its nature that He could not admit it even to His own mind without misgiving. He needed some further light from God, some absolute assurance, before He was prepared to assert it before the world.

That assurance was at last granted Him; and henceforth He threw aside all hesitation. He went up to the feast at Jerusalem and offered Himself to the people as their promised King.

The Messiahship of Jesus is only invested with a new and a deeper import when we thus think of it as dawning on Him gradually, through a process of doubt and struggle. If He had set out with the clear conviction that He was the Messiah, He would have been fettered at every step by the old tradition. He could have aimed at little more than at following out, in some mechanical fashion, a path marked out for Him. As it was, the knowledge of His Messiahship grew up out of His personal consciousness. He had already learned God's will concerning Him and entered on His own vocation, before it was revealed to Him that His work was that of the Messiah. Thus while He accepted the ancient title He impressed it with a new meaning. It had not been given Him, but He had won it for Himself, and taught men to interpret it through His own life.

CHAPTER VII.

SON OF DAVID AND SON OF MAN.

After the close of the Old Testament period, the idea of the Kingdom of God had tended more and more to assume an apocalyptic character. The hopes of men were directed, not so much to the future of Israel as to the new age in which the whole order of the world would be miraculously changed. But the national sentiment was always powerful, although it was disguised and to some extent modified by the larger speculations. It is taken for granted even in such writings as Enoch and 4 Esdras that the community which will inherit the better world of the future will be no other than the people of Israel —either the nation as a whole or the chosen remnant that constitutes the true Israel. In the popular anticipations of the coming age, the deliverance of the nation had never ceased to occupy the central place. Apocalyptic ideas were formally accepted, but they were little more than a background for the great patriotic dream of the supremacy of Israel.

The hope of the Kingdom of God was thus a

twofold one; and it had its counterpart in a twofold conception of the Messiah. He was regarded, on the one hand, as the Davidic king foretold in Old Testament prophecy; and, on the other hand, as an angelic being who was to come with the clouds of heaven in the last days. Both of these conceptions had their acknowledged place in the Messianic tradition, and although they had so little in common they were continually blending one with another. In the Psalms of Solomon, for example, the Davidic king of prophecy is endowed with supernatural attributes. He comes before us at once as the national deliverer and as the vice-regent of God, who is to judge the world and establish the new reign of righteousness.

Jesus fell heir to these two different conceptions of the Messiah; and they were linked together in His thought, as in that of the people generally. An obligation was laid upon Him, when He claimed the Messianic dignity, to satisfy alike the popular hope of a deliverer of Israel and the apocalyptic hope of a supernatural being who would appear from heaven. Much of the difficulty in which the Gospel history is involved is due to this mingling, in the one Messianic idea, of two entirely different elements; and it is more than probable that the difficulty was acutely felt by Jesus. His effort to fulfil the traditional hope was complicated at every turn by a radical inconsistency in the hope itself.

It might appear at first sight as if He disregarded the purely national elements contained in the Messianic idea. He held sedulously aloof from the revolutionary agitation of His time. He made it evident by His personal bearing and His modes of activity that He was something other than the warlike champion whom the people were looking for. The catastrophe which finally overtook His mission had one of its causes, if not its chief cause, in His deliberate refusal of a mere patriotic leadership. All this is true—yet it must be remembered that the national idea was essentially bound up with the Messianic hope; and by simply discarding it He would have emptied His chosen title of all its meaning. It must also be remembered that the Old Testament itself had contemplated a national Messiah; and to Jesus the word of Scripture was authoritative. While disowning the human tradition by which the sacred tradition had been obscured and perverted, He accepted the message itself as the "commandment of God."[1] However He might unfold and interpret it, in the light of its deeper import, He was not at liberty simply to reject it. To the Old Testament prophets the Messiah had been always the Davidic king, who would bring deliverance to Israel; and Jesus had no choice but to take up the expectation in this its consecrated form. That He actually did so can admit of little doubt when we consider the distinct evidences of the Gospel narrative.

[1] Mk 7^{8}.

(1) The idea of the Kingdom is associated by Jesus with that of the restored theocracy.[1] In His later teaching He appears to think of Himself as reigning over this community of the future, and promises to His disciples that they also "will sit with Him on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[2] It is evident from the language employed here that the promise must be taken in a partly figurative sense. The division into twelve tribes belonged to a remote past; and Jesus implies, by His allusion to it, that He is not thinking of the actual nation, but of another, ideal Israel. None the less, the vision before Him is that of the Jewish Kingdom, revived in some new and worthier form. As the Messiah of prophecy He will be enthroned as King over God's people: and the disciples will be His assessors and will exercise power in His name.

(2) He limited His activity to His own countrymen —not, we may be sure, from any narrow instinct of Jewish exclusiveness. His message was by its nature universal, and He rejoiced to think that Gentiles could be responsive to it.[3] He looked to a time when many would come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. How, then, are we to explain His reluctance, as in the incident of the Syrophœnician woman, to show forth His power outside of His own country? His attitude of restraint seems to have

[1] *V. ante*, p. 83. [2] Mt 19^{28}=Lk 22^{30}. [3] Mt 8^{10}=Lk 7^{9}.

been due to a deliberate purpose, and the key to it is most probably to be found in the influence of the traditional Messianic idea. A restriction was laid upon Him which was alien to His own nature. In His character of Messiah He was appointed to a national office, and hesitated to work outside of Israel lest He might be exceeding His commission. It is not a little striking that the Syrophœnician incident took place on the very eve of the confession at Cæsarea Philippi; and perhaps it reflects to us the mood of perplexity in which Jesus found Himself at that time. Assured that He was the Messiah, He was anxious to fulfil the part ordained for Him by Old Testament prophecy, although He could not but feel that it was inadequate. He strove for the moment to observe it, but presently gave up the effort, and yielded to His own larger intuitions of the will of God.[1]

(3) The offence alleged against Jesus at the trial, and displayed in the inscription on the Cross, was that He professed Himself to be King of the Jews. It is true that the accusation was made by His enemies, who may have misunderstood or wilfully misconstrued His attitude; but we can hardly doubt that they relied on evidence which appeared to them sufficient. He had so acted and spoken as to create the impression that He claimed to be the Messiah, in the popular acceptation of the term. Indeed, if we

[1] Mt 8^{11}.

can believe our records, He Himself admitted the charge in the σὺ λέγεις of His reply to Pilate. The words in themselves are enigmatical, and have been interpreted sometimes as an affirmation, sometimes as a waiving aside of the question. In either case it is obvious that Jesus purposely expressed Himself in a guarded manner. He declined to give an answer whereby He might be condemned out of His own mouth—especially when His inquisitor was a Gentile, who would naturally understand the title "King of the Jews" in its crudest political sense. But the answer, though guarded, is explicit. Jesus does not refuse the title, but only suggests that Pilate has failed to comprehend it in its true import. In a meaning which it was impossible to explain before such a tribunal, He was indeed "the King of the Jews."

(4) We must further take into consideration those passages in which the name "Son of David" is assigned to Jesus by others, without His disclaiming it.[1] The passages are chiefly supplied by Matthew, and are partly to be accounted for by the strongly Jewish complexion of his Gospel. He desires to assimilate the life of Jesus to Old Testament types and forecasts, and in the Old Testament "Son of David" is the characteristic title of the Messiah. In Mark it meets us only once,[2] although it is clearly implied in the acclamation which greeted Jesus

[1] Cf. Mt 9^{27} 12^{23} 15^{22} $20^{30.31}$ $21^{9.15}$ $22^{42.43}$. [2] Mk 10^{47}.

on His entry into Jerusalem, "Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David that cometh in the name of the Lord."[1] There is no reason to doubt that He was saluted, at least on several occasions, as Son of David; and though the title was associated with the conventional ideas of the promised King, He did not disown it. He was willing to acknowledge that it corresponded with at least one aspect of His Messianic office.

(5) The beliefs of the primitive Church must always be allowed a certain weight in questions affecting the Gospel history. It may be granted that at a very early date the facts began to be modified by doctrinal theory, and the value of the later evidence may easily be exaggerated. But when all is said the ideas that were current in the first generation after Christ must have been largely derived from His own teaching, and afford us our best commentary on the narrative of His life. Nothing can be more certain than that the primitive Church identified Jesus with the Messiah of the national hope. The speeches of Peter in the Book of Acts,[2] which preserve to us the substance of the earliest Christian preaching, are based on the assumption that Jesus was the expected Son of David. The same belief is embodied in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, which are no doubt taken over from the tradition of the church in Palestine. Even Paul,

[1] Mk 11^{10}.

[2] Ac $2^{14ff.}$ $3^{12ff.}$ $4^{8ff.}$.

whose testimony is the more valuable as he represents a different type of Messianic doctrine, finds himself obliged, at least in passing, to recognise the commonly accepted view, and to speak of Jesus as "made of the seed of David, according to the flesh."[1] It may be urged that the disciples had failed to penetrate the higher thought of Jesus, and fell back on popular Messianic beliefs which He had transcended. But this line of argument will not carry us beyond a certain point. The idea of the Davidic kingship could never have attached itself so strongly to Jesus unless He had in some way sanctioned and encouraged it.

We may conclude, then, that He assumed the Messianic title in its natural and historical meaning. The Old Testament prophets had foretold a King who would restore the throne of David; and to Jesus the word of prophecy was binding. However He might feel the contradictions which were involved in the ancient conception, He was obliged to allow a place for it in the fulfilment of His office as Messiah. But although we must not regard His attitude towards it as one of antagonism, we have evidence that He sought to re-interpret it, and so bring it into harmony with His own idea of His vocation. This re-interpretation was the more necessary as His Messianic claim was of the nature of an afterthought.

[1] Ro 1^3.

He had not set out with any intention of following a prescribed programme, but had acted freely and spontaneously, according to His own inward sense of the Divine purpose. His work was nearing its close before He reflected on its deeper import, and explained it to Himself as the work of the Messiah.

In His relation, therefore, to the popular Messianic hope as to the Mosaic law, He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. The conception of a great deliverer of the house of David is not thrown aside, much less controverted, but it is raised to a higher plane and worked out to its larger issues. To the prophets, the redemption of Israel was the appointed task of the Messiah. Jesus accepted the commission thus laid upon Him; but He referred it to the ideal Israel—the elect community of God's people. That very feature of the Jewish anticipation which marked it as national and exclusive, became the point of departure for a world-wide message. Again, the Messiah was to be a King, who would restore the dominion of David his father. Jesus claimed for Himself this Kingship, but identified it with a royalty of service.[1] He came forward as the leader of Israel, and demanded obedience and reverence. But He based His leadership deliberately on moral forces, to which alone He conceded a true authority. Once more, the Messiah was pictured as a warrior, who would pursue a career of conquest and overcome the

[1] Cf. Mk $9^{33f.}$ $10^{42f.}$.

oppressors of his people. These oppressors, in the ordinary view, were the Romans; but Jesus thought of them as the spiritual enemies—the demons and powers of wickedness that held men in bondage. He offered Himself as the Deliverer—the strong man who would spoil their house and bring their tyranny to an end.[1] Thus the various elements of the traditional hope were changed by Jesus into their ethical and religious equivalents. He could feel that He was giving to the prophecies an even truer fulfilment than the prophets had dreamed of, and that He was indeed Son of David and King of the Jews.

In this re-interpretation of the Old Testament idea, Jesus was assisted by the Old Testament itself. It is characteristic of His teaching throughout that while admitting the Scriptures to be divinely inspired, He checks and criticises them by means of each other. For example, in His sayings concerning the Sabbath, the ritual observances, the law of divorce,[2] He is careful not to impugn the Old Testament regulations, which presumably were of God. But He confronts the familiar passages with others of a different tenor, which had been overlooked. He finds in the Scriptures the corrective, or the fuller explanation, of their own apparent message. It was in like manner that He was enabled to translate into new terms the prophetic anticipations of the Messiah. They seemed all to

[1] Mk 3^{27} = Mt 12^{29}. Lk 11^{21}.
[2] Cf. Mk 2^{25}, Mt 9^{13} 23^{23}, Mk $10^{6f.}$.

point in the one direction; but He singled out among them the two or three predictions that contain the germ of a more spiritual idea. On the ground of these He could claim that He was only developing to its real issue the thought of the prophets themselves. The most striking example of this correction of Scripture by Scripture is the symbolic act of the entry into Jerusalem. By that act He made His first public declaration of His Messiahship; and He made it in such a way as to vindicate from prophecy His new conception of the office. The people had formed their hopes of the Messiah from a given type of prophecy; but He reminded them that at least one prophecy was of a different character. The king whom it foreshadowed was to conquer by the power of meekness and accomplish a work of peace.

We have a similar example of Jesus' method in the remarkable passage which deals expressly with the Messiah's relation to David.[1] According to some scholars,[2] the Davidic origin of the Messiah is here denied, or treated as unimportant; but this is surely to mistake the real intention of the passage. What Jesus seeks to prove is the difference in kind between the kingship of David and that of the Messiah. The scribes maintained that the Messiah as Son of David was to revive the glories of the ancient house and exercise a literal sovereignty. They relied on

[1] Mk $12^{35f.}$ = Mt $22^{41f.}$, Lk $20^{41f.}$. [2] *e.g.* Wellhausen.

scriptures which seemed to bear out their theory; but Jesus calls their attention to another scripture. David himself, the reputed author of the 110th Psalm, alludes to the Messiah as his "Lord"—implying thereby that he would possess a higher than earthly kingship. Throughout the passage, the term "Son of David" is used in a pregnant sense, to denote not merely physical descent, but likeness in character and vocation. On this use of the term the whole argument depends.[1]

A third instance of Jesus' employment of scripture, in order to correct the scriptural doctrine of the Messiah, still falls to be considered. There is reason to believe that to the Old Testament passages, commonly recognised as Messianic, He added the great prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Suffering

[1] Spitta (*Streitfragen der Geschichte Jesu*, 144–172) has recently suggested a new and ingenious interpretation of this important passage. Adopting the account of Luke, he would connect it with the answer to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. The difficulty that David and even Abraham would be subordinate to their descendant the Messiah in the general resurrection, had already perplexed Jewish thought; and Jesus avails himself of the familiar instance in order to refute the error of the Sadducees. He parallels the difficulty proposed by them with a still greater one, and thus proceeds to show that the conditions of the present will no longer obtain in the future. The passage, on this interpretation, would cease to have any bearing on the Messianic thought of Jesus. Spitta's argument, however, depends wholly on his peculiar view that Luke is a more trustworthy source than Mark. Even if this could be granted, the passage has to be explained in the light of the definite question: "How say they that the Christ is David's son?" Jesus desires to know whether the relation to David can be predicated of the Messiah —not whether it will still obtain in the future.

Servant of Jahveh. If He indeed made use of this prophecy, it is easy to understand how the traditional figure of the Messiah became associated in His mind with a new order of moral and spiritual ideas. The question, however, will require to be discussed in detail in a later chapter. It has an all-important bearing, not only on Jesus' attitude to the current Messianic conceptions, but on the ultimate problems of His personal life.

We have sufficient ground, then, for the conclusion that Jesus accepted the ordinary view of the Messiah as the promised king of the house of David. He could not do otherwise without divesting the Messianic title of all its historical import, and refusing the testimony of scripture, which was authoritative to Him as to the people at large. The ordinary view was undoubtedly beset with grave limitations, and seemed to stand in hopeless contradiction to the higher religious aims which He had set before Him. It is not surprising that modern writers have found the central difficulty, and in some respects the tragedy, of our Lord's life, in the necessity laid upon Him of adapting His Divine vocation to a form which was wholly inadequate.[1] Yet the difficulty was by no means insuperable. With the help of the Old Testament itself He was able so to interpret the

[1] Cf. Bousset, *Jesus*; Holtzmann, *Das Messianische Bewusstsein Jesu*.

ancient hope that it answered to His own aspirations. Even those elements in it which seemed most intractable could be transmuted and spiritualised till they added new glory to the picture of a King and Saviour. The real difficulty encountered by Jesus was presented by the other side of the Messianic anticipation. Blended, as we have seen, with the idea of a triumphant Son of David, there was that of a supernatural being who was to come with the clouds of heaven and inaugurate the new age. How could the actual facts of the life of Jesus be brought within the framework of this apocalyptic hope? How could He apply to Himself a title which involved the claim not merely to an earthly kingship, but to a heavenly origin and dignity? The self-designation "Son of man" as we find it in the Gospels is the starting-point of a series of problems which at once fascinate and baffle us. It will be well to take up these problems one by one in their natural order. When we thus consider them separately we may have better hope of simplifying them and arriving at some approximate solution.

(1) Did Jesus Himself employ the title of "Son of man"? It meets us so constantly in the records of His teaching that all doubt on this head might appear to be inconceivable. Yet the radical question as to whether the original tradition knew anything of the title has been urged in recent years by scholars of the

foremost rank.[1] Their contention is that it was first bestowed on Jesus after His death, to mark the Christian belief in His Divine character, and that it had no sanction in any recorded words of His own. Two main arguments are put forward in support of this negative theory: (*a*) the impossibility of His arrogating to Himself a title of this nature; (*b*) the linguistic difficulties connected with the title, in its original Aramaic form.

(*a*) As regards the more general argument, we must needs acknowledge that the name was incompatible with the apparent facts of the life of Jesus, and that He could only assume it under certain reserves, and with a peculiar meaning. That the Church in its worship and gratitude beheld in Him the heavenly Son of man may appear, on the face of it, a more likely hypothesis than that He claimed such a dignity Himself. Yet we have to reckon with the fact that the title so continually recurring in the Gospels[2] is found only once in the later New Testament literature[3]—if we leave out of account two dubious and indirect references in the Book of Revelation.[4] If it was conferred on Jesus by the primitive Church, why is there practically no trace of it in the literature of the Church? The ideas it connoted were fully in harmony with the early

[1] Lietzmann, Wrede, Wellhausen, Schmidt ("The Prophet of Nazareth" and article "Son of Man," in *Encyc. Bibl.*).

[2] Sixty-nine times in the Synoptics, twelve times in John.

[3] Ac 7^{56}. [4] Rev 1^{13} 14^{14}.

Christian beliefs; why should the name itself have fallen so entirely into disuse? Its frequent occurrence in the Gospels and in them alone can reasonably be explained only on the one supposition—that it had come down as an inseparable element of the history of Jesus. The Church had early abandoned it, perhaps on the ground that it was specifically Jewish, and conveyed little meaning, or a positively wrong meaning, to the great body of Gentile converts. But the fact that Jesus had used it was still vividly remembered. In writings that purported to record His actual words it could not be omitted or changed into its later equivalents. The employment of it in the Fourth Gospel seems to afford evidence that it was thus regarded as a sort of hall-mark of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. In that Gospel it is wholly superfluous. Its meaning has become merged in the more explicit title of "Son of God," for which the evangelist has a decided preference. Yet he feels himself obliged, on occasion, to make conventional use of the earlier title. It is familiar to his readers as the self-designation of Jesus, and preserves the historical colour and verisimilitude of his work.

(*b*) The linguistic difficulty has come into prominence only in the last few years, as a consequence of the closer study of Aramaic in its relation to the Gospels. It is contended that in the language spoken by Jesus the ordinary word for "man" was no other than

"Barnasha," or "Son of man." To use this word as a specific title was, therefore, impossible; and the attribution of it in this sense to Jesus must be due to some misunderstanding. In the discussion of this whole question, however, scholars are still at variance, and no final decision is attainable with our present imperfect knowledge of Aramaic idiom in the time of Christ. The evidence certainly appears to support the view that "Barnasha" meant simply "man";[1] although so competent a scholar as Dalman finds reason to maintain that this usage is comparatively late, and that in earlier Aramaic the word might well have borne its compound meaning. In any case, it is easy to make too much of the linguistic difficulty. Even though it could be fully proved that the word employed by Jesus was the ordinary word for "man," there was nothing to prevent Him from giving it an emphatic sense. By tone and gesture, and by the context of His discourse, He could make it sufficiently clear that He was not speaking of man in general, but of "The Man" of apocalyptic prophecy. That there was no insuperable difficulty is evident from our Gospel records themselves. They are based presumably on Aramaic documents, in which the same term may have signified both "man" and "Son of man." Yet the evangelists are able to distinguish between the two senses,

[1] This is the result of the careful investigations of Fiebig, *Der Menschensohn*.

although the ambiguity must have been much greater in the written than in the spoken word.

Something, however, may be conceded to the linguistic argument. It serves to remind us that the Aramaic term for "Son of man" was not altogether precise; and while in most cases its emphatic use could easily be discerned, a confusion may sometimes have crept in. There is a strong probability that this is true of at least two passages, which cannot well be interpreted when we take them as they stand. In Mark's Gospel the name "Son of man" invariably occurs in a definite connection, and at a date subsequent to the declaration at Cæsarea Philippi. But to this rule, which affords our only satisfactory clue to Jesus' use of the name, there are two apparent exceptions: (*a*) on the occasion when He heals the paralytic at Capernaum—"that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins";[1] (*b*) when He justifies His disciples in their apparent breach of the Sabbath law—"therefore the Son of man is lord also of the Sabbath."[2] In the first of these passages, however, the thought of Jesus becomes clearer and more consistent when we allow for the possibility that He employed the word "man" in its ordinary sense. The scribes were reasoning among themselves that forgiveness of sins belonged to God alone; and Jesus offered to convince them that there was a *man* who had this prerogative.

[1] Mk 2^{10}. [2] Mk 2^{28}.

Undoubtedly He meant to suggest that He was a man apart from others and possessed of extraordinary powers; but the point of His assertion was that the Divine forgiveness could indeed be mediated through a man. In the second passage, the evidence appears even more decisive. We cannot but feel, when we read the passage as a whole, that the conclusion is quite irrelevant to the premises—"the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." But as soon as we substitute "man" for "Son of man" the logical sequence becomes plain and inevitable. Since the Sabbath was made for man, man is lord of the Sabbath; he has the right to determine how he shall use it for the purposes of his higher well-being. It is noticeable that Matthew and Luke, in their version of the incident, have been struck by the apparent flaw in the logical connection. They retain the saying about the Son of man as they find it in Mark, but omit the preceding words altogether.[1] These are the two passages which have most probably been affected by an ambiguity in the term; but others may be added to them, in which an error of translation is possible. For example, in the saying, "He that speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him," etc,[2] the thought appears to be that the maligning of Jesus and His miraculous work is nothing less than blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which acts through Him. The reference to the Son

[1] Mt 12^{8}, Lk 6^{5}.

[2] Mt 12^{32} = Mk 3^{28}, Lk 12^{10}.

of man is, therefore, a contradiction in terms. Perhaps the original saying contrasted ordinary slander—speaking evil of "man"—with the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. Or perhaps the words in Mark, "All sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men," have been so distorted by Matthew and Luke as to yield a definite reference to the "Son of man." A confusion may likewise be suspected in the two sayings, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head,"[1] and "The Son of man came eating and drinking."[2] A well-attested Aramaic idiom is the use of "Barnasha" in the indefinite sense ("one," "somebody"),[3] and Jesus may so have employed it in the sayings in question. "Here is a man who hath not where to lay his head." "There came one eating and drinking."

In the case of a few passages, therefore, the peculiar title may be due to a misunderstanding of Aramaic usage; but neither on linguistic nor on more general grounds can we eliminate it from the Gospels. The evidence seems to prove unmistakably not only that it was used by Jesus, but that it impressed itself on the memory of His disciples as one of His characteristic terms. For this very reason, however, we require to make a large reduction of the numerous instances of its occurrence. When it had once come to be recognised as the self-designation of Jesus, the

[1] Mt 8^{20}=Lk 19^{57}. [2] Mt 11^{19}=Lk 7^{34}.
[3] Cf. Fiebig, *Der Menschensohn*, 59 f.

evangelists would tend to introduce it as a matter of course into all sayings in which He alluded to Himself. The name which originally had a well-defined meaning would be resolved into little more than a conventional mode of speech. In proof of this we have only to study the parallel passages of the three Gospels. Mark admits the name very sparingly, and always, as we shall presently see, in connection with a special group of ideas. The other two evangelists observe no such restrictions. They bring in the name without any regard for context; and in not a few instances their usage can be clearly demonstrated to be quite arbitrary. Thus, where Luke writes "For the Son of man's sake," Matthew has simply "For my sake."[1] The question in Mark, "Who do men say that I am?" is amplified by Matthew into the impossible form, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" By a similar process of comparison we can arrive at practical certainty that the evangelists themselves have freely inserted the name in many places where it was wanting in their authorities.[2] The list of passages in which it occurs must, therefore, be very largely sifted. There still remain instances which cannot be removed without destroying the whole Gospel tradition; but it is fully evident that "Son of man"

[1] Lk 6^{22} = Mt 5^{11}.

[2] Mk 8^{27}, Lk 9^{18} = Mt 16^{13}; cf. Mt 26^{2} = Mk 14^{1}, Lk 22^{12}, Lk 22^{28} = Mk $14^{45.\ 46}$, Mt 26^{49}.

was by no means a name which was habitually used by Jesus. He had resort to it only on rare occasions, and never without a definite purpose.

(2) What was the meaning of the name as employed by Jesus? To this question various answers have been suggested, most of which can be dismissed in a few words. (*a*) The older theology took for granted that Jesus spoke of Himself as "Son of man" in order to distinguish His human from His Divine nature. This, however, would now be maintained by no responsible scholar. The distinctions which came to be formulated in the course of later Christological development are not to be sought for in the teaching of Jesus Himself. (*b*) A modern interpretation which has been widely accepted would make "Son of man" equivalent to ideal, or representative man. "There was in Jesus no national peculiarity or individual idiosyncrasy. He was not the Son of the Jew or the Son of the carpenter; nor the offspring of the modes of living and thinking of that particular century. He was the Son of Man."[1] This thought is in itself true and beautiful, but is obviously out of place in a name applied by Jesus to Himself. Moreover, it fails to correspond with the actual use of the name in the Gospels. When we examine the best attested passages, we can see at once that Jesus is not thinking of His typically human character, but of something

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 194.

which removed Him altogether from the common world of men. (*c*) A somewhat similar view has recently been proposed by Dr. Abbott, who supports it with his accustomed eloquence and prodigal wealth of learning.[1] He argues that Jesus borrowed the name from the 8th Psalm and the Book of Ezekiel, where man is described in his twofold condition of earthly humiliation and likeness to God. "What is man," says the Psalmist, "that thou art mindful of him or the Son of man that thou visitest him? Yet thou hast made him but little lower than God and hast set all things under his feet." By His adoption of the expressive title "Son of man," Jesus sought to intimate that He stood for the Divine potentiality in human nature. He was the Man in whom God had revealed Himself, and whose victory would deliver all men from their bondage. This theory, however, is too subtle and complicated; and turns on ideas which are foreign alike to the teaching of Jesus and to the Old Testament passages. The derivation from the 8th Psalm is more than doubtful. It can be rendered plausible only by a learned process of indirect reasoning, which cannot seriously be attributed to Jesus. (*d*) There remains one explanation which has commended itself to the great majority of New Testament scholars as practically certain. The fountain-head of all later apocalyptic thought was the

[1] Abbott, *The Message of the Son of Man*; also *Notes on New Testament Criticism*, 140 ff.

Book of Daniel, with its central passage concerning "one like unto the Son of man."[1] From this passage the mysterious name had already been borrowed by the author of the Similitudes of Enoch; and it was probably current among the people as one of the recognised titles of the Messiah.[2] Even in the absence of any express evidence, there would be a strong presumption that Jesus had the Danielic passage in His mind; but the fact is placed beyond all reasonable doubt by the context in which He repeatedly uses the title. He associates it with phrases directly quoted from Daniel's vision.[3] To Him as to Daniel the Son of man is the destined instrument through whom God will inaugurate His Kingdom. It is true that Daniel says nothing of the Judgment by the Son of man, on which a constant emphasis is laid in the teaching of Jesus. But in the Book of Enoch, where the Danielic conception is further elaborated, the Son of man is pre-eminently the Judge,[4] and appears as in the Gospel descriptions, with a retinue of angels.[5] The conclusion is unavoidable that when Jesus speaks of the Son of man He alludes to the apocalyptic figure imagined by Daniel and his successors.

(3) Did Jesus claim to be Himself the Son of man? Here we arrive at a crucial question, to

[1] Dn $7^{13.\ 14}$.

[2] Such a saying as "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man" seems to presuppose a familiar body of tradition.

[3] Mk 8^{38} 13^{26} 14^{62}. Mt 24^{30} 26^{64}.

[4] Cf. En. 45^{3} 49 61^{8}. [5] En. 61^{14}.

which a negative answer has been given even by scholars who admit the historical character of the Gospel references.[1] Their contention is that while He foretold the near advent of the Son of man, He thought not of Himself, but of the heavenly being described in the Apocalypses, who was shortly to follow Him. In His own mind the distinction was clear, but at a subsequent time it naturally became obliterated. The allusions to the Son of man which had come down in the tradition were applied to Jesus Himself; and in this sense found their way into our Gospels. Arguments of considerable weight can be brought forward in support of this contention. It is remarkable, at the very outset, that Jesus should always speak of the Son of man in the third person, as of some one whose work and character He is contemplating. In not a few instances this mode of speech is carefully maintained through sentences and paragraphs.[2] Not only so, but there are sayings in which Jesus would appear to distinguish Himself, in a pointed and deliberate manner, from the coming Son of man. "He that is ashamed of me and of my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed."[3] "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."[4] Here and elsewhere the Son of man is apparently some other than Jesus.

[1] *e.g.* Völter, *Das Messianische Bewusstsein Jesu.*
[2] Mk 8^{50} 9^{12} 8^{32}, Lk 12^{8}, Mt 10^{22} 16^{28} 17^{12} 19^{28}.
[3] Mk 8^{38} = Lk 9^{26}.
[4] Mt 10^{23}; cf. also Lk 17^{22}, Mt 16^{27} Mk 8^{38}.

He is the eschatological being, by whom, according to current ideas, the Kingdom of God will be ushered in; and Jesus looks forward to His appearance with eager expectancy, as to the grand event which will bring His own work to fruition.

But against this view it may be urged, on the one hand, that it would involve the complete discrediting of our Gospel records. The evangelists clearly take for granted that when Jesus speaks of the Son of man He is alluding to Himself; and it is inconceivable that on a matter of such capital importance they should be out of touch with the authentic tradition. If they are in error here, we cannot but conclude that they have misunderstood the facts of the history altogether. And on the other hand, the references to the Son of man cannot be isolated from the Messianic teaching of Jesus as a whole. It is quite evident, in the light of numerous explicit passages, that He identified the eschatological figure with the Messiah;[1] and the question before us is, therefore, only a part of the larger one. Did Jesus claim Himself to be the Messiah? If He did so—and the evidence on this point would seem to be indubitable—He cannot have regarded Himself as some other than the Son of man.

It is possible, nevertheless, that the theory contains a certain measure of truth. We have found reason to believe that Jesus arrived at the conviction of His

[1] Mk $14^{61.62}$ = Mt $26^{63.64}$, Lk 22^{66-69}, Mt 8^{29-31} = Mt 16^{16} 20^{27}.

Messiahship gradually and tentatively; and there may have been a period, in the earlier stage of His ministry, when He distinguished between the Son of man who was to inaugurate the Kingdom and Himself who was only its harbinger. This phase of His thought may perhaps be reflected in one of the sayings already quoted—"Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." The saying almost compels us to assume that Jesus was not yet fully conscious of His own Messiahship. He believed that the Kingdom was presently to break in; but the Son of man, whose glorious appearing was to mark its advent, was nothing to Him yet but a vague figure of eschatology. It was only as His own vocation became ever clearer to Him, that He learned to identify this figure with Himself.

(4) Why did Jesus designate Himself by a name which was so hard to reconcile with the manifest facts of His earthly life? The name "Messiah" was itself beset with many difficulties—yet it was capable of a new interpretation, and Jesus could appropriate it without any sense of inconsistency. But the Son of man belonged wholly to the world of apocalyptic vision. By resorting to a title which above all others declared the supernatural character of the Messiah, Jesus might seem to have only emphasised the futility of His own claim.

According to the view which has found widest

currency, He called Himself "Son of man" in order to veil His Messiahship until the time arrived for confessing it openly. The name, it is assumed, was esoteric, if not coined by Jesus Himself, and was therefore unintelligible to the multitude. It committed Him to no prescribed course of action, while at the same time it compelled men to ponder its meaning, and so prepared them for the later declaration. This view, however, lies open to one obvious and fatal objection. The name "Son of man" had already been attributed to the Messiah; and was probably familiar, in this sense, to the people at large. So far from concealing, or in some manner qualifying, the Messianic dignity, it was the supreme title of the Messiah. It described Him not only as King of Israel, but as a heavenly being who would preside over the future judgment and represent God in the events of the last days.

A similar objection may be urged against the second view—that Jesus preferred the name "Son of man" to that of "Messiah," because it was less entangled with associations of a national and political nature. It had originated in apocalyptic thought, and could, therefore, be adapted without difficulty to the new spiritual message. But the truth is that the apocalyptic name was more misleading in its suggestion, and far less tractable to the higher purposes of Jesus than the historical name "Messiah." Not only did it connote all the pre-

vailing ideas of a national avenger and liberator, but it was bound up with a fixed eschatological scheme from which it could not be separated. As Messiah, Jesus laid claim to a kingship the nature of which He was Himself free to determine. The Messianic conception was a plastic one, and had already been construed along widely different lines by the various schools of Jewish thought.[1] But the title of Son of man was applicable solely to the heavenly being of apocalyptic prophecy. In so far as He adopted it, Jesus placed a restriction upon Himself in His interpretation of His Divine calling.

An answer to the question has been sought in another direction by several modern writers.[2] In view of the fact that Jesus did not refer to Himself as "Son of man" until the closing period of His ministry, they suggest that He fell back on the Messianic ideal of Daniel as His last refuge. He was now aware that the hopes to which He had clung were to be frustrated by His death; but instead of abandoning them He looked beyond His death—confident that in spite of all He would yet triumph. The Scriptures had spoken not only of a Son of David, but of a Son of man, who would come with the clouds of heaven; and He identified Himself with this Son of man. Crushed though He might be by the earthly forces which had proved too strong for Him, He was assured that He would return in power. This

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 43.

[2] *e.g.* Bousset, Holtzmann.

assurance was "the anchor by which He saved Himself when His cause was apparently ruined." To a certain extent this is probably a true account of the motive of Jesus in His adoption of the apocalyptic title. It carried with it the idea of triumph and vindication; and this side of its meaning must have appealed to Him ever more powerfully as the inevitable disaster came nearer. But we cannot lose sight of this further fact—that He associates the title, not only with the ultimate victory, but with the disaster itself. "He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and be killed, and after three days rise again."[1] No theory can be wholly satisfying which does not throw light on this profound and significant aspect of our Lord's thought. He conceives of Himself as destined to suffer and die, as well as to triumph, in His character of Son of man.

Without yet entering on the discussion of this problem, we may hazard a provisional answer to the question before us. Why did Jesus designate Himself by a name that was incompatible with the actual conditions of His life? He did so—may we not conjecture—for the very reason that it was thus incompatible. It pointed forward to a mysterious future when His limitations would be done away—when He would be invested with new attributes. It

[1] Mk 8^{31}; cf. $9^{12.\ 31}$ 10^{33} 45. $14^{21.\ 41}$.

served to remind men that they should think of Him, not as He was, but as He would be hereafter. As yet they could see nothing in His Person or work that answered to their expectations of the Messiah; and they were unable to admit His claims. But the name "Son of man" was in itself sufficient to call up the vision of the great future. The apparent contradictions would all be resolved when He entered on His destined office in the approaching dawn of the Kingdom of God.

By His use of the apocalyptic title, therefore, Jesus meant to imply that His Messiahship, in its true manifestation, was reserved for the future. God had appointed Him to bring in the Kingdom; but the final drama in which He would bear His part had not yet commenced. His dignity was still latent and potential. The whole testimony of the early Church appears to support this conclusion—that Jesus regarded Himself as a future rather than a present Messiah. Thus Peter in his speech at Pentecost describes Him as a man approved by wonders and miracles, whom God has now "made both Lord and Christ."[1] Paul thinks of Him as Son of David according to the flesh, but now "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead."[2] Underlying all the later writings of the New Testament we can trace the same assumption that He has now entered

[1] Ac $2^{22.\ 36}$. [2] Ro 1^{4}.

on a mode of existence different from that of His earthly life, and has been clothed with higher attributes. The Messiahship formerly latent has become actual, and will finally be revealed to all men at His return in glory. It is doubtless in the light of similar ideas that we must understand the incident of the Transfiguration as recorded in the Gospels. For one hour the disciples were permitted to look into the future. They beheld the earthly Master as He was destined to be hereafter—a heavenly being, accompanied by the great prophets who were to act as His assessors. The incident may possibly embody, in a symbolic form, some intimation given by Jesus of the destiny in store for Him. He whom His disciples had known hitherto under mere earthly conditions would appear in the coming days as the Son of man.

At this point, however, we find ourselves face to face with one of the problems of the life of Jesus. While He looked to a future Messiahship, He yet claimed, in some sense, to be possessed already of His great office. To the high priest's question whether He was the Christ, He answered, "I am." He made His entry into Jerusalem as the promised King. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi declared simply "Thou *art* the Christ"; and Jesus acquiesced in this judgment of His disciple. All through the Gospels there appear to be these two aspects to

the Messianic claim. It looks, on the one side, to a dignity reserved for the future, and, on the other, to an actual and present vocation.[1]

This twofold view of the Messiahship is indeed perplexing; yet we are enabled to understand it, at least partially, when we remember how the idea of the Kingdom is likewise a two-sided one. The coming of the Kingdom is an event of the future. By a sudden and miraculous act all things will be transformed and the world will pass over into the new age. Nevertheless, the Kingdom, though still future, is making itself felt in the present. It has come so near to men that they can discern its powers and subject themselves to its laws and conditions. The idea of the Messiah was strictly correlative to that of the Kingdom, and it was almost inevitable that as Jesus thought of His vocation He should see it in a double significance. He was the Messiah of the future—the Son of man who could not be revealed till God's purpose had reached fulfilment. But in the same degree that the Kingdom was already asserting itself and projecting its influences into the present order, He was the Messiah now. In some real though limited sense He could assume the title and exercise the prerogatives which would be His hereafter. It is this double strain in His Messianic consciousness which seems to find expression in the

[1] Mk 14^{61} = Mt 26^{64}, Lk 22^{70}.

answer to the high priest: "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." He declares Himself to be already what He will be, when the Kingdom has come and He has fully entered on His Messiahship.

We conclude, therefore, that Jesus designated Himself the "Son of man" in order to point men to His future destiny. His earthly life was in seeming contradiction to His great claim; yet they were to accept Him as the Messiah, in view of the part which He would enact hereafter. His work as yet was preparatory, but it was leading up to His ultimate manifestation as the Son of man. This account of the name is borne out by the passages in which it is most clearly demonstrable that Jesus employed it. Invariably they have reference to the final apocalyptic events—to the inauguration of the Kingdom, the Judgment, the perfecting of the holy community. To this rule there is the signal exception on which emphasis has already been laid; but we shall find, when we consider it more closely, that it is only an apparent one. The suffering and death, no less than the eventual triumph, were associated in the mind of Jesus with His supreme vocation as Son of man.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUFFERING MESSIAH.

From the time of Cæsarea Philippi onward, according to the testimony of our Gospels, Jesus foretold to His disciples that He must die, in the accomplishment of His work as Messiah. It is evident from His rebuke to Peter that He was Himself conscious of the strangeness of this prediction. Peter had expressed a doubt with which He had been struggling in His own mind, and which even yet, in spite of His deeper instincts, could not be wholly repressed. But He thrust it away from Him as a temptation of Satan. The ordinary conception of the Messiah, which was still unquestioned by the disciples, "savoured of the things of men"; and He sought to replace it by another, more in accordance with "the things of God."

The modern criticism of the Gospels has tended to throw suspicion on those prophecies of His betrayal and Passion which constantly recur in the later teaching of Jesus. They belong, it is argued, to the primitive apologetic, which found it necessary to prove, as against Jewish unbelief, that by His death

on the Cross Jesus had asserted His Messiahship. "A sharp distinction was drawn between the Jewish and the Christian Messiah. As earthly Messiah Jesus had been rejected; but through this very rejection He had attained to His true and heavenly dignity."[1] It may indeed be conceded that the predictions as they have been handed down to us are marked by a certain artificiality; but we cannot on that account explain them solely by the influence of later doctrine. As in the similar case of the "Messianic secret" we have rather to consider whether the doctrine itself may not be based on a historical fact, which had been stamped ineffaceably on the memory of the disciples.

Are we justified, then, in accepting the Gospel tradition that Jesus conjoined His Messianic claim with the prophecy of His death? We have here a question that touches the very heart of the history; and it resolves itself into two. (1) Did he contemplate death as a probable issue to His own life-work? (2) Was it possible for Him to believe, in the face of all prevailing ideas, that the Messiah was destined to suffer? These questions involve two different sets of problems, and need to be answered separately.

(1) With regard to the first question, there is little room for doubt that Jesus latterly perceived His death to be probable, if not inevitable. He was fully

[1] Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 90.

aware of the hostile temper of the national authorities. He could not conceal from Himself that after His decision to advance the Messianic claim, the gathering hostility would be brought to a head. It is indeed apparent that He committed Himself, as always, to the leading of God; and that up to the very last He deemed it possible that God might interpose by some act of miracle and take the cup from Him. But the story of Gethsemane makes it clear, at the same time, that He believed the threatened doom to be humanly certain. Even if the definite predictions were absent altogether, we might fairly assume, from the mere facts of the historical situation, that on His last journey to Jerusalem He was travelling consciously towards His death.

We cannot, it is true, accept without some reservation the view which has been generally adopted by writers of the Life of Christ.[1] They take it for granted that the later period was one of waning popularity and increasing consciousness of failure. The ministry which had commenced in Galilee amidst a great outburst of enthusiasm is pictured as already a forlorn hope when Jesus decided on His last appeal. Mark's narrative, however, appears to know nothing of this revulsion in the popular feeling. It represents the cause of Jesus as continually gaining new adherents and attracting to itself an ever larger measure of

[1] For trenchant criticism of this view, see Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, 90 f., and Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*.

public interest and sympathy. That it actually did so is more than probable, when we think not only of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but of the very fact that the new movement was considered so dangerous as to require the death of its leader. Yet it still remains certain that the success was at best superficial; and Jesus can hardly have been deceived by it in His forecast of the issue. He knew that the more He won the attention of the multitude, the more obnoxious would He become to the official classes, in whom the real power was vested. Herod had already declared against Him, and it was not difficult to foresee that the priesthood and the Roman administration would presently do likewise. He knew, moreover, that He held the allegiance of the people by a fragile bond, the breaking of which was only a matter of time. Their minds were occupied with the hope for a national deliverer; and when they finally discovered that they had mistaken His purpose, they would turn on Him the more fiercely for their disappointment. Granting, therefore, that the later phase of the ministry was attended by few signs of manifest failure, there was still ample reason why Jesus should entertain a gloomy view of the probable outcome. He could perceive, ever more clearly as time went on, that He had entered on a path that was sure to lead Him to disaster unless God Himself should interpose. To the will of God He committed His cause when He resolved to go up to the Passover;

but although prepared for either event, He saw plainly in what direction the Divine will was carrying Him. A great conflict was before Him, in which He must be ready to lay down His life.

The presentiment of death, which thus took possession of Jesus towards the close of His ministry, may have overshadowed Him, in some degree, from the first. Already in the Galilæan days, if we may accept the story of Mark,[1] He foretold a time when "the children of the bride-chamber would mourn because the bridegroom was taken away from them." The saying can admit of only one interpretation; and it is so strangely out of keeping with the mood of joy and hopefulness which pervades the earlier teaching, that many scholars would remove it from its present context. Without questioning its genuineness, they would assign it to a later period of Jesus' life, when the possibility of a tragic issue to His work was beginning to weigh upon Him. But it is difficult to think of any motive that could have led Mark to antedate the saying. Elsewhere he proceeds on the assumption that the mournful predictions began after Cæsarea Philippi, and he would not here have transgressed his rule unless the tradition had been too strong for him. The saying itself, too, stands in an integral connection with the whole context in which we find it. It presupposes the bright conditions under which Jesus began His work; and cannot be

[1] Mk $2^{19f.}$.

ascribed to any later time without losing its force and appositeness. May we not conjecture that it affords us a glimpse into the mind of Jesus in that initial period when His horizon seemed quite unclouded? He was beset even then with a premonition of disaster. He had counted the cost of His great venture and knew that He was awakening an antagonism which would in the end overwhelm Him. The thought that He would die in the accomplishment of His mission was thus no sudden one, forced upon Him by circumstances. It had been present to Him from the first, however vaguely and fitfully, and the subsequent events served only to deepen it into an abiding conviction.

(2) We now pass to the second question, which is much more complex and difficult. Did Jesus conceive of the death of the Messiah as possible? Could He contemplate a tragic close to His life and mission and yet maintain that He was thereby fulfilling the appointed task of the Messiah? The popular anticipation was undoubtedly that of a victorious King, who would scatter all enemies with the breath of his mouth and enter upon a splendid reign. Death or suffering, as Peter indicated by his remonstrance at Cæsarea Philippi, could not be dreamed of for a moment in connection with the Messiah. In certain passages of the apocalyptic writings[1] we indeed meet

[1] *V. ante*, p. 39.

with an apparent exception. The eventual death of the Messiah is assumed; but it is to follow in natural course after He has finished His work and ruled prosperously for a long age over the restored Israel. A violent death, consequent on defeat, was utterly foreign to the Messianic hope of the Apocalypses. The nearest analogy to the Christian conception is probably to be found in the Rabbinical speculations concerning the Messiah ben Joseph[1]—who appears in the last age and falls a victim to the dagger, during the assault of the confederated nations on Jerusalem. But this curious speculation, when we begin to analyse it, only proves how incompatible with Jewish thought was the idea of a suffering Messiah. The necessity was felt of explaining away the obscure passage of Zechariah which might be construed as portending death to the future deliverer;[2] and a secondary figure was invented—a less fortunate champion who would perish before the final victory. It was assumed to be impossible that the true Messiah could die.

At this point, however, we require to face a problem which has a connection of the most vital nature with the life and thought of Jesus. Although the idea of a suffering Messiah had no place within the circle of ordinary Jewish speculation, there was yet one cardinal

[1] Apparent analogies in the Midrash and Talmud (as in the reference of Ps 22 to the Messiah) are to be set down to Christian influences. Cf. Rabinsohn, *Le Messianisme*, 161 f.

[2] Zec 12^{10}.

passage of Scripture to which it might attach itself. The great prophetic book of the second Isaiah culminates in the vision of the Servant of Jahveh who is bruised and wounded for the sake of others, and dies that he may intercede for their transgressions. Both in ancient and modern times this section of prophecy has been the centre of endless discussion. Does the prophet "speak of himself or of some other man"? Is the Servant of Jahveh whom he contemplates an historical or a purely symbolic figure? The criticism of our own day would acknowledge that the riddles of the prophecy have not all, by any means, been solved; but most Old Testament scholars are agreed on its general interpretation. Under the type of an individual sufferer the prophet describes the nation, or at least the "remnant," the righteous kernel of the nation. He declares that God has visited His faithful people with calamity, not in punishment of their own sin, but that they may offer an expiation for the sins of others.[1] The prophecy cannot, therefore, be regarded as a higher development of Messianic thought. It is significant, rather, as the profoundest solution attempted in the Old Testament of the problem of unmerited suffering.

The passage of Isaiah is not in itself Messianic;

[1] The modern critical view is well presented by Budde, *Die Ebed-Jahve Lieder*. Gressmann (*Israelitisch-Jüdische Eschatologie*), holds that a figure of mythology lies at the background of the symbolism. But even if this could be established, the idea, as it existed in the prophet's own mind, would remain the same.

and we have no evidence that it was ever so construed by Jewish theologians. It stood in palpable contradiction to the hope of a victorious deliverer which was the central motive of Messianic speculation, in all its manifold phases. But the attitude of Jesus to the Old Testament is everywhere marked by a bold originality. He does not bind Himself to mere traditional interpretations, but discovers an unsuspected meaning in the most familiar texts. Are there grounds for believing that He thus dealt with the vision of the Suffering Servant, and gave it an application undreamed of in contemporary Jewish thought?

It has often been noted that in our Gospel records there is hardly any direct allusion to the prophecy, and the inference has been drawn that Jesus was wholly unaffected by it in His conception of His task.[1] For Him, as for the religious teachers of His time, it carried with it no Messianic purport; and in His acceptance of suffering as the true path of His vocation, He was guided solely by His own intuition of the will of God. Another view allows for a certain influence exerted on Him by a Scripture which He had no doubt pondered; but regards this influence as entirely general in its character. He saw in the passage a reference, not to the Messiah, but to the typically righteous man, and in this sense applied it to Himself. When the dreadful truth had broken on Him that He, although innocent, was presently to die a shameful death, He

[1] Cf. Wellhausen, Wrede, Burkitt.

took comfort from the well-known Scripture concerning the righteous one who "was numbered with the transgressors." [1]

The allusions to the passage are indeed scanty; especially when we consider the prominence assigned to it in the later books of the New Testament. The Christian Church, examining the Scriptures in the light of accomplished facts, at once singled out the 53rd chapter of Isaiah as the supreme Messianic prophecy. Among the elementary truths which Paul received from the primitive disciples was this—"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"; [2] and there was only one Scripture where such a doctrine could seem to be suggested. The comparative silence of the Gospels themselves on a prophecy which had become the very corner-stone of Christian teaching is indeed strange; yet it warrants us in approaching the few recorded allusions with a certain degree of confidence. There is a presumption that in this all-important matter the evangelists have faithfully preserved the tradition. They are aware that Jesus Himself made a sparing and peculiar use of the great proof-text, and are careful to reproduce His actual words.

The one direct quotation from the prophecy is that which is reported by Luke in his account of the Supper: "I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned with the transgressors; for the things

[1] Hollmann, *Die Bedeutung des Todes Jesu*, 77. [2] 1 Co 15^3.

concerning me have an end."[1] Jesus here regards the prophecy as written of Himself in His Messianic character. He seems to imply by the closing words that He has already given fulfilment to other Old Testament predictions, and that it only remains for Him to realise this one, in which all the rest are summed up. The evangelists all record another saying at the Supper, which refers, almost as explicitly, to the Isaianic prophecy: "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed."[2] When He declared that Scripture itself had foretold the death of the Messiah, Jesus can only have been thinking of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah—the solitary Old Testament passage which connects a Divine vocation with suffering and death. But apart from these definite sayings, we have to take into account the various allusions by Jesus to the whole cycle of prophecy in which the Suffering Servant appears as the central figure. There is ample evidence that this section of Isaiah was constantly in His mind and exercised a powerful influence on Him. It could hardly be otherwise; for not only did this stand out as the grandest and spiritually the most suggestive portion of the Old Testament, but it bore directly on that coming of the

[1] Lk 22^{37}.

[2] Mk 14^{21} = Mt 26^{24}, Lk 22^{22}. There is probably a foundation for the theory of Dr. Abbott (*Paradosis*) that behind the idea of "betrayal" in the Gospels lies that of the "delivering up" which is suggested in Is 53.

Kingdom which was the one theme of His teaching. We might fairly say that His whole doctrine of the Kingdom was penetrated with the ideas of this great section of Scripture. He read a passage from it before announcing the purpose of His mission, in the synagogue at Nazareth.[1] He pointed to it in His answer to the emissaries of John, implying that His wonderful works were the fulfilment of its promise of the Kingdom.[2] The very word "Gospel," by which He described His message, was apparently borrowed from the second Isaiah, and involves a reference to the whole prophecy, in which the nature of the "good tidings" had been set forth most clearly.[3] It is inconceivable that Jesus should so have occupied Himself with this part of the Old Testament without meditating on the great passage which constitutes the heart of it. The Kingdom was associated in the prophet's thought with one who was to suffer on behalf of others. Who was this "Servant of the Lord"?[4] What was the function allotted to Him in the bringing in of the Kingdom? In what relation did He stand to the promised Messiah? As Jesus sought an answer to these questions we can well understand how He came to attach an ever deeper significance to the Suffering Servant. The conviction broke on Him that this sublime figure of the prophet's vision was himself no other than the Messiah. His

[1] Lk 4^{18}=Is 61^{1}. [2] Mt 11^{5}; cf. Is 61. [3] Is 40^{9} 52^{7}.

[4] For a very able discussion of the place of the Servant prophecy in the teaching of Jesus, see Professor Kennedy's articles in the *Expository Times* for 1908.

conception of His own work was determined for Him henceforth by the passage of Isaiah, in which He now discerned the supreme Messianic prophecy.

That Jesus so read the passage will become still more apparent when we consider in detail the sayings which touch on the meaning of His death. At the risk of anticipating the later discussion, we may here instance the most remarkable of those sayings—"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." We shall find reason to conclude that when Jesus spoke these words, the Isaianic prophecy was consciously in His mind. The "ministering" of the Son of man, which is to be finally exemplified in His death, recalls the meekness and self-effacement of the Servant. The offering of a "ransom" suggests the fundamental idea of the prophecy—that the death of the righteous Servant will be an expiation for the sins of others. Above all, the strange expression "for many," which is otherwise so perplexing, explains itself most naturally when we think of the corresponding phrase, twice-repeated in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, "He will justify many." "He bare the sins of many." It is difficult to escape the inference that Jesus desired His saying to be understood in the light of the prophetic chapter, and gave the clue to His intention by this echo of its literal words.

In view, then, of the various indications afforded us in the Gospels, we can have little doubt that

Jesus identified the Suffering Servant of the Lord with the Messiah. To the current anticipations of a victorious king He opposed a different conception, equally supported by scriptural authority, and more in harmony with His own inward sense of His Messianic calling. When we allow for this continual influence on Him, during the later period, of the great passage in Isaiah, we can no longer regard the predictions of His suffering and death [1] as purely unhistorical. They have come down to us, it may be granted, in a stereotyped form, and recur at regular intervals according to a given scheme. To this extent they betray a literary origin; and it cannot be maintained that they were spoken exactly in the order and on the occasions which are assigned to them. Yet their substantial authenticity need not be questioned. After Cæsarea Philippi a new element entered into the teaching of Jesus; and as He revealed to His disciples that He was Himself the Messiah, so He sought to impress upon them a new conception of the Messiah's character, based on the prophecy of the Suffering Servant. In this manner we may find an explanation even for the details which have often thrown suspicion on the predictions as a whole. It indeed appears incredible that Jesus should have foretold not only His death, but all the circumstances that were to accompany it; yet we may suppose

[1] Mk 8^{31}=Mt 16^{21}, Lk 9^{22}. Mk $9^{31.\ 32}$=Mt $17^{22.\ 23}$, Lk $9^{43.\ 44}$. Mk 10^{32-34}=Mt 20^{17-19}, Lk 18^{34}.

that the warnings as first uttered were more general in their nature. Jesus spoke to His disciples of the Suffering Servant who was rejected, set at naught, scourged, unjustly slain, and taught them to think of the Messiah according to this picture. At a later time the teaching thus suggested by the Old Testament passage would naturally be understood as literal prediction. The belief sprang up and found expression in our Gospels, that Jesus had foreseen all things from the beginning and had spoken circumstantially of His own Passion.

The prophecy of the Suffering Servant, as we have tried to demonstrate, was of cardinal importance for the Messianic thought of Jesus. It afforded Him that support from Scripture which was necessary to Him as a devout Israelite. It enabled Him to transform the popular conception of the Messiah, and so to assimilate the ancient hope to His own sense of His vocation. Yet we are not to regard the prophecy as in any way suggesting to Him the course which He henceforth followed. The very fact that He was the first to construe it as Messianic is sufficient proof that there were ideas in His own mind to which it merely responded. Assured though He was of His Messianic calling, He knew that He must suffer in order to bring His work to its fulfilment. We have, therefore, to consider more closely in what manner He had arrived at this conviction,

which was illuminated and confirmed by the specific prophecy. All reasoning at this point is necessarily conjectural; yet there are indications in the Gospels by which we may be guided.

(1) In the first place, we have evidence that He was intensely moved by the death of John the Baptist, which took place when the sense of His Messiahship was in process of ripening into certainty. This latest instance of a prophet rejected served to remind Him that such had been the fate of all the prophets, and that He could Himself expect no other. John, moreover, was not a prophet merely, but more than a prophet—the Elijah whose coming was to prepare the way for the events of the last days. It was His reflection on the import of John's mission which seems first to have awakened in Jesus the surmise that He might Himself be the Messiah; and when John was put to death He could not but see His own destiny under a different aspect. If the coming of John foreshadowed that of the Messiah, might not his death also be typical and prophetic? A peculiar significance attaches, in this connection, to the verses which immediately follow the story of the Transfiguration, in our existing text of Mark's Gospel.[1] Jesus there replies to the difficulty propounded by His disciples, that the Messiah would not appear

[1] It is highly probable that the true position of the verses is after 8^{38}.

until Elijah had first come. He declares that the promised Elijah was no other than John the Baptist, who had suffered "as it was written of him";[1] and from the fate of John He passes to that of the Son of man, who was likewise to "suffer many things and be set at nought." The saying is obscure and difficult; but we can, at any rate, infer from it that Jesus believed His destiny to be linked, in some mysterious way, with that of John. As it had been with the forerunner, so would it be with the Messiah who followed him.

(2) Again, there can be little doubt that Jesus was largely influenced in His Messianic thought by His view of the real nature of kingship. In a whole series of memorable sayings and incidents, He takes occasion to enforce this view. He tells His disciples that in their estimate of ranks and dignities they must adopt other standards than those current among the Gentiles.[2] He points to a little child as the type of the only greatness that will be recognised in the Kingdom of God.[3] He answers the request of the sons of Zebedee by warning them that the places of highest honour were only to be attained through sacrifice.[4] Everywhere in His teaching we

[1] This reference cannot be traced back to any definite passage in the Old Testament. Unless the words are regarded as a free addition by the evangelist, we must suppose that Jesus alluded to the persecution of the first Elijah, or to the general fact that all prophets had suffered.

[2] Lk $22^{25f.}$. [3] Mt $18^{1f.}$. [4] Mt $20^{20f.}$.

can discern the same pervading thought—that the sovereign life is the life of humility and service and self-surrender. It was inevitable that His conception of the Messiahship should be coloured from the first by this belief. While accepting the traditional hope of a great King who would restore the throne of David, He gave His own interpretation to the hope. Kingship and greatness had a different meaning to Him than to the multitude. The conviction that the Messiah would die in the realisation of his kingly office was thus no afterthought on the part of Jesus. He may not have formulated it in so many words until near the close of His ministry, but it was essentially bound up with His whole thinking. The more He reflected, the less could He be satisfied with the conventional doctrine. If the Messiah was the ideal King, he must be supreme in the true kingly attributes, and suffer to the uttermost on behalf of others.

(3) In His advance to the new conception, Jesus was inevitably influenced, in some degree, by the actual course of events. We cannot, indeed, admit the theory which has frequently been held by modern writers, that His interpretation of His death was wholly due to the outward conditions. At first—it is argued—He expected to gain His end by means of teaching and persuasion; but gradually it became apparent to Him that His original plan had failed. The leaders of the people had declared

against Him, and if He was faithful to His calling, His death at their hands was unavoidable. But as He reflected on this almost certain issue, He learned to construe the historical as a Divine necessity. Since He was appointed to die, God must have purposed from the beginning to fulfil His Kingdom through a suffering Messiah. The theory as a whole is utterly irreconcilable with all that we know of the life and character of Jesus. He was no opportunist, whose plans and convictions had all to be moulded for him by the hand of circumstance. His belief that He was destined to suffer was rooted, as we have seen, in His habitual thought, and had been interwoven from the beginning with His consciousness of Messiahship. None the less, we may discern this much of truth in the theory. The course of events, while it did not suggest to Him His new conception, enabled Him to grasp it more firmly and define it more clearly. Hitherto the thought that the Messiah would suffer had been merely an intuition of His own, and it needed to be confirmed to Him by some manifest sign from God. The sign was given Him in the actual development of events. He knew, from the dangers which began to encompass Him, that He had rightly interpreted the Divine will. God was Himself constraining Him to follow the one path whereby He could bring His work to fulfilment.

We can thus understand, at least in some partial measure, how the thought of His Messiahship became linked in the mind of Jesus with that of His suffering. Perhaps from the very outset, before He had yet surmised His Messianic calling, He was conscious by a deep instinct that a tragic destiny awaited Him. This consciousness, if it was not prior to His sense of Messiahship, was at all events twin-born with it. There was never a time in the life of Jesus when He seems to have anticipated a career of victory and a peaceful reign, such as the popular fancy had marked out for the Messiah. In the same moment that He first made His declaration at Cæsarea Philippi, He foretold that "the Son of man must suffer many things." The supreme dignity, as He conceived it, was bound up with this necessity of suffering. Only when He had thus construed its nature could He advance His claim that He was Himself the Messiah. We have now to consider more closely what ideas were involved in this attitude of Jesus. What efficacy did He ascribe to His suffering that He should see in it the very goal and purpose of His Messianic vocation? An answer to this question can only be attempted when we examine the three outstanding passages in which He speaks of His approaching death.

(1) The first of these sayings is that preserved for us by Luke: "But I have a baptism to be baptized

with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."[1] It is noteworthy that Jesus elsewhere[2] alludes to His death as a "baptism"; and we may thereby infer that the image gave expression to one of His characteristic thoughts. In the first instance, no doubt, we may regard it as merely a natural metaphor, analogous to that of the Psalmist: "Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul."[3] Jesus tries to describe, with the help of a vivid picture, the inward shudder experienced by Him as He thinks of Himself plunged suddenly into the darkness of death. Yet it is hardly possible that He should have employed this particular image without some reference to the special meaning which baptism had possessed for religious minds since the days of John. It had become emblematic of a spiritual purification, of a renewal of the whole nature preparatory to the entrance into the Kingdom of God. When Jesus spoke of the baptism which He must undergo, He may well have intended to suggest that His death would bear the character of a mysterious rite. By means of it some wonderful change would take effect in Him, so that He would emerge from the dark waters into a new and higher life. That a thought of this kind is implicit in the image is rendered almost certain by the words that follow: "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Jesus here

[1] Lk 12^{50}. [2] Mt 20^{22}. [3] Ps $124^{4.5}$.

implies that He is subject as yet to conditions that imprison and fetter Him. He cannot move at freedom till He has undergone His baptism; and He looks forward to it with passionate eagerness as to the great event which will mark the beginning of His true activity. What was the nature of this change for which He was waiting, and which could not come too soon? In the light of our previous investigation we can hardly doubt that it was the transition to His Messianic dignity. Hitherto He had been excluded from the great office to which He was destined. His power at best had been limited and preliminary. By death He would be finally invested with the Messianic attributes and would commence His appointed work of bringing in the Kingdom of God.

(2) A paramount importance attaches to the second saying: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.[1] Attempts have been made to explain it as a mere reflex of later Pauline theory; but they cannot be regarded as successful. In the first place, the correspondence with Paul is more apparent than real. It is indeed possible to interpret the words, "a ransom for many," in the strict Pauline sense; but the Pauline ideas have first to be read into them. We shall find when we examine them in their own

[1] Mk 10^{45}.

context that they bear another meaning, which is only obscured by pressing the Pauline analogy. Again, we have always to remember that Paul's fundamental doctrine was not wholly a creation of his own. He elaborated it in special directions—alien in many respects to earlier Christian thought—but the doctrine itself was given him. "I delivered unto you that which also I received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."[1] It is more than likely that this article of faith, which he took over from the primitive disciples, was originated in some form by Jesus Himself. We have no right to discard the saying before us as a mere fragment of antedated Paulinism, until we have considered whether it may not afford us an all-important clue to the genesis of Paulinism itself.

In any fair interpretation of the much-debated saying, it is necessary to observe that it consists of two parallel clauses, which ought to be taken together. Jesus is teaching His disciples to find their true ambition in a life of service; and enforces His lesson by pointing them to His own example. The Messianic King has reversed the rule which is followed by the great ones of this world. He has come, not to exalt Himself at the cost of others, but to serve, and will consummate His service by His death. But while we thus allow a certain equivalence to the two clauses, we must be careful to preserve the emphasis which

[1] 1 Co 15^3.

undoubtedly falls on the second. With the prospect of His death immediately before Him, Jesus could not but centre His thought upon it. He did not mean to suggest that His death was on the same footing with His life,[1] but rather that the life was about to receive its full interpretation through the death. The Son of man had come to perform one supreme act of service; and of this the whole ministering life had been the prelude and foreshadowing.

What meaning, then, must be assigned to the three crucial words, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν? Scholars have tried repeatedly to extort their secret by methods of exact philological analysis. Each of the three words has been placed by turn under the microscope, with the object of discovering some abstruse idea concealed in it. But the language of Jesus is not to be tortured in this manner. He was content to use ordinary words in their natural meaning; and we have no evidence that it was otherwise here. Indeed, it has been pointed out that an almost literal analogy to the phrase is found in Josephus,[2] who tells how the massive golden beam of the Temple was given up to Crassus as a λύτρον ἀντὶ πάντων. One item of priceless value was surrendered in order to save the remaining treasure. The import of the phrase in Josephus is perfectly

[1] This view is maintained by Hollmann in his book, *Die Bedeutung des Todes Jesu.*

[2] Joseph. *Antt.* xiv. 10. 7.

plain; and we are not to encumber it with imaginary difficulties when we find it in the Gospels. Jesus is not concerned with subtle delicacies of meaning, but with the large idea, that the sacrifice of one would avail for many.

The difficulty lies, therefore, in the interpretation of this thought as a whole. In what sense did Jesus regard His death as effecting the deliverance of many? From what imminent danger were they to be delivered? Who were the "many" on whose behalf He was to give His life? The theory has been put forward, in answer to these questions, that He was thinking only of the immediate situation with which He and His disciples were confronted. A great peril hung over His chosen company, and by the surrender of His own life He undertook to ensure the safety of all the others.[1] This explanation is obviously inadequate; and it fails, moreover, to take any account of the idea conveyed by the context—that Jesus' whole life of service was to be supremely exemplified by His death. According to other theories the deliverance to which He referred was from the yoke of the Pharisees, or from sin, or from death, or from the sufferings of this world. Without discussing these various conjectures in detail, it may be said with regard to all of them that they take the saying in too limited a sense. The conception always dominant with Jesus was that of the Kingdom of

[1] Schmiedel, *Evangelium Des Johannes*, 63.

God—the new order of blessedness and liberty which was about to dawn. When He spoke, as He does here, of the grand purpose for which He had come, He must have been thinking of this advent of the Kingdom in the widest range of its significance. By His death He was to deliver men, not from one particular evil or another, but from the whole state of bondage to which they were subjected in the present age. In other words, His act of self-sacrifice was the appointed means whereby the Kingdom of God would be realised. Many were to enter into life through the death of one.

The full purport of the saying can only be understood in the light of the Old Testament reminiscences which lie behind it. It has often been inferred from the superficial resemblance of language, that Jesus was thinking primarily of the passage in the 49th Psalm: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother or give his life a ransom for him."[1] But while the Psalmist may have supplied the form of the expression, his thought has nothing in common with that of Jesus; and for the real parallel we must look elsewhere. It is found, as has been indicated already, in the prophecy of the Suffering Servant; and the more we study the saying the more we are constrained to believe that Jesus was consciously thinking of this prophecy. Although He does not directly quote it, He compresses into a single phrase

[1] Ps 49^{7}.

the whole idea of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah—that God's purpose was to be fulfilled by one wh ohumbled himself and sacrificed his life for the sake of others. The one real verbal difficulty of the saying is likewise solved most naturally when we assume that Jesus made direct reference to the prophetic passage. The apparent limitation involved in the word "many" is indeed perplexing; yet we can understand why Jesus chose this word in preference to any other. He did not mean that His death would only avail for a certain number, but that He would die, like the Suffering Servant, for the common deliverance.

The saying then, if we have interpreted it rightly, declares that Jesus by His own death will effect the coming of the Kingdom of God. Men were in a condition of bondage—oppressed by all the hostile powers of the present age. The death of the Son of man would be the decisive act which would bring in the new age of freedom. Jesus does not seek to explain how His death would operate towards this end; yet we have a glimpse in the saying of several ideas which seem to have weighed with Him. (*a*) He accepted the prophet's thought that the suffering of the righteous has an atoning value; and He gave it at the same time a wider application. His suffering would set men free, not only from their sins, but from the manifold evil and misery of their lot. (*b*) He believed that through His crowning act of self-sacrifice the new moral order would become a reality.

Greatness had hitherto been estimated by earthly standards; but all this would now be changed. The Son of man was about to die for the many — the greatest was to make himself as a servant. By this offering of His own life Jesus hoped to establish that law of the Kingdom which He had proclaimed in words. He would inaugurate the new community, in which the first would be last and the last first. (*c*) He expected that He would attain to His true Messianic dignity by means of His death; and that as Messiah He would be free to bring about the great deliverance. The pervading thought of the whole passage is this—that the highest place is only to be won as the reward of sacrifice. "Whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all." This truth is to have its sovereign exemplification in Himself, who by the act of absolute self-surrender will be raised to His supreme office as Son of man.

(3) It was in His institution of the Supper that Jesus alluded most explicitly—alike by word and symbol—to the meaning of His death. Four accounts of the Supper have come down to us;[1] but it is unnecessary for our present purpose to enter into the complicated question of their relation to one another. Broadly speaking, they fall into two groups—Paul

[1] Mk 14^{17-25}, Mt 26^{20-29}, Lk 22^{14-23}, 1 Co 11^{23-25}.

and Luke,[1] as against Mark and Matthew. The former group is chiefly distinguished by two peculiarities. (*a*) It represents the Supper as a memorial feast ("This do in remembrance of me"). (*b*) It substitutes a reference to the Christian community (*ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*) for the more general reference to "many." These features in the record both betray the influence of later ecclesiastical usage and reflection; and there can be little doubt that in Mark and Matthew we have the more authentic tradition. This is the more certain when we find that Luke has preserved, alongside of his Pauline statement, the saying reported also by Mark and Matthew, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."[2] The Supper is conceived, not as a memorial feast, but as an anticipation of the future Messianic banquet. Not only the conception, but the mode of expressing it is highly characteristic of Jesus; and we can be almost certain that we have here the original thought which afterwards underwent a transformation. In one all-important point the four accounts are in agreement.

[1] The weightiest MSS. give the Lucan account as we have it; but Codex D, supported by certain other MSS., omits 19 *b* and 20, in which the Pauline element is most distinctly marked. Blass and Wellhausen would strike out the whole of 19—an emendation which would remove this account of the Supper altogether. There seems no valid reason for refusing the unanimous testimony of the most important MSS. Cf. the discussion of the whole question by Lambert, *The Sacraments in the New Testament*, 244 ff.

[2] Lk 22^{18} = Mk 14^{25}, Mt 26^{29}.

Jesus, when distributing the cup, speaks of a "new covenant" effected through His blood.

There are two ideas, then, which we can single out with sufficient confidence as present to the mind of Jesus when He instituted the Supper. He regarded it, on the one hand, as the sign of the inauguration of a new covenant: on the other hand, as the foreshadowing of a banquet in the Kingdom of God. These ideas seem both to have been suggested by the Passover feast, in connection with which the Supper was celebrated. The Passover was the commemoration of that covenant which God had made with Israel on their coming forth from Egypt. It was fraught also with memories of escape from bondage and entrance into the promised land: and as men participated in it their minds were lifted to visions of a brighter future. We have only to think of the words which are still repeated at the beginning of the Jewish Passover service: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. . . . This year here, next year in the land of Israel. This year servants, next year sons of freedom." It is not impossible that these words may be the later substitute for a formula actually in use in our Lord's time; but in any case they help us to understand the train of thought which was awakened in Him by the associations of the feast. "When next I drink of the fruit of the vine, it will be in the Kingdom of God."

So in the first place Jesus speaks of a new covenant to be established by His death, of which the poured-out wine was the symbol. He refers to "the new covenant" as to something definitely foretold; but the reference is somewhat ambiguous since it may apply to either of two Old Testament prophecies. There is first the well-known passage in Jeremiah:[1] "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my law in their inward parts and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Elsewhere, however, the new covenant seems to be identified with the promise made to David that the kingdom would be vested in his house for ever.[2] This promise is accepted as the guarantee of God's eternal care for His people and of their eventual restoration in spite of their many calamities. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, even the sure mercies of David."[3] "I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; and I will make with them a covenant of peace."[4] The

[1] Jer $31^{31ff.}$.
[2] 2 S $7^{12ff.}$; cf. Ps 89^{27}, 132^{11}.
[3] Is 55^{3}.
[4] Ezk 34^{23}; cf. $37^{24ff.}$.

higher relation in which Israel will hereafter stand to God is to be realised when He fulfils His promise made to David.

Which of these covenants foretold in the Old Testament was contemplated by Jesus when He spoke the words at the Supper? Arguments have been advanced on either side; but perhaps too much has been made of the seeming ambiguity. For when we examine the various passages more closely it becomes apparent that they all refer to the same covenant. The theme of Jeremiah, as of the other writers, is the future exaltation of Israel; but while emphasis is laid elsewhere on the bare fact of Israel's supremacy, he asks himself what that privilege will consist in. He declares that God will fulfil His promise by granting a more inward knowledge of Himself and a more perfect fellowship with Him. No mention is made of the Davidic kingship; but the hopes connected with it are simply lifted out of their historical setting, and presented more loftily and spiritually. Both of these types of prophecy, therefore, were concerned with the new age, in which God would enter into a closer relation with His people. The covenant, in other words, was nothing else than the establishment of the Kingdom. As in ancient times God had made His solemn agreement with Israel, so in the future He would choose out for Himself the new community and invest it with its larger privileges. In this sense we are to understand the words of

Jesus. He points to His death as the great act whereby the New Covenant will be sanctioned and confirmed. By His death He will accomplish His Messianic work of inaugurating the Kingdom of God.

The Supper, in its other aspect, was an anticipation of the Banquet which would be held hereafter. As Jesus sat with His disciples under the immediate shadow of death, He found relief for His spirit by thus looking forward to another Supper, soon to come, in which all the conditions would be reversed. He would then preside, as the acknowledged Messiah, over a feast of gladness, made ready for His people in the Kingdom of God. More than once in His teaching Jesus employs the symbolism of a banquet to describe the joyous fellowship and the satisfaction of all desire, which would be vouchsafed in the coming age.[1] The symbol in itself was a natural one; and it had been consecrated in the popular imagination by Isaiah's use of it in one of the classical prophecies of the great deliverance.[2] Under the influence of this Old Testament passage, the future Banquet had become one of the regular features in apocalyptic imagery.[3] It was identified so closely with the thought of the new age that it sometimes appears as a synonym for the new age itself. In

[1] Cf. Lk 16^{22}, Mt 8^{11}.

[2] Is 25^{6-8}. According to Gressmann (*Israelitisch-Jüdische Eschatologie*) the idea runs back to early mythological beliefs regarding fellowship with the Divinity in the sacrificial feast.

[3] Cf. *ante*, p. 23.

this manner we have to understand the reference of Jesus at the Supper. When He speaks of the Messianic feast, He is thinking, under a familiar symbol, of the Kingdom which is presently to be realised. The saying resolves itself into nothing else than a repetition, in more pictorial language, of the idea contained in the allusion to the New Covenant. Both of these sayings, by means of which the original purpose of the Supper must be interpreted, are prophetic of the Kingdom. Jesus associates it with His death, as with the grand act which will bring it to fulfilment.

Thus in each of the three passages which fall under discussion, the death is contemplated from a different point of view, but essentially the same thought is presented. Jesus believes that by the sacrifice of His life He will bring about the great transition. For Himself, the death will be a breaking down of the limitations which have hitherto bound Him. Instead of the potential, He will become the actual, Messiah, endued with all the attributes and prerogatives of the heavenly Son of man. And His exaltation to the Messiahship will mark the commencement of that final drama in which the Messiah will bear the central part. "Through His blood" the New Covenant will be established. He will enter in His death upon His destined Messianic task of fulfilling the Kingdom of God.

A solution now offers itself for that problem which we have hitherto found so perplexing. "Son of man" is an apocalyptic title, reserved for the angelic being who will preside over the advent of the Kingdom; and in this sense it is employed by Jesus. He designates Himself "Son of man" as He foretells His future glory, and His coming with the clouds of heaven to execute the Judgment. Yet, as we have seen, He associates the title no less emphatically with His death than with His eventual triumph. "The Son of man must suffer many things." "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him." "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." In such a context His use of the mysterious name seems wholly meaningless; but the contradiction disappears when we think of the significance which He assigned to His death. He regarded it as His "baptism"—His consecration to the Messianic office. By means of it He expected to achieve, or at least begin, the great work appointed Him. Thus His death was itself the opening episode of the consummation. It had its place within the cycle of final events, to which the mission of John the Elijah and His own earthly ministry had been the prelude. What seemed to the eyes of men to be nothing but a blind catastrophe, overwhelming His cause in ruin, had only brought it to fruition. Not in spite of His death, but in and through His death, He was to assert Himself as Son of man.

By the sacrifice of His life, therefore, Jesus hoped to bring in the Kingdom which He had proclaimed. It does not appear, indeed, that He looked for the consummation to follow immediately. We can infer from the apocalyptic discourses that He anticipated a whole series of events which would lead up at last to His glorious coming and the realisation of the Kingdom. There were to be wars and tribulations; the Temple was to fall and the Jewish nation to be shattered; the entire order of the present world was to undergo a dissolution, before the "sign of the Son of man" finally appeared in heaven. In the apocalyptic tradition the period of the Messiah had always been thus drawn out into a chain of episodes, linked with one another into a single drama; and Jesus acquiesced in the common tradition. Nevertheless, He believed that the first and decisive episode would be His death. All the other events would be set in motion by it and would only work out to a final issue what it had already effected. Potentially, if not in actual fact, His death was the coming of the Kingdom. In the closing days, as He stood under the shadow of the Cross, He lost sight of the interval that must elapse before He appeared again in His glory. He thought of His death as itself the triumph. By the sacrifice of His life as a ransom for many He would establish the New Covenant and enthrone Himself as the Messiah in the Kingdom of God.

CONCLUSION.

We have endeavoured in the preceding chapters to determine the nature of the message of Jesus as it was proclaimed by Himself to His Jewish contemporaries. He delivered it under categories of thought which had begun to lose their meaning even before our Gospels were written; and the task was laid upon the Church, almost from the outset, of reinterpreting the message, in order to make it intelligible to a new audience and a later time. As we go behind this subsequent version of the Gospel to the thought of Jesus Himself, our first impression is one of doubt and bewilderment. We ask ourselves whether the Church has not entirely missed the intention of Jesus—whether His religion as we know it can in any sense lay claim to His authority. These questions, which are perplexing so many earnest minds in our own day, have already been answered indirectly; but it may be well in a few concluding pages to gather up the general results of our inquiry, and consider their bearing on the larger issue.

The teaching of Jesus was based throughout on His conception of the Kingdom; and this conception

did not originate with Himself, but had been gradually developed through centuries of Jewish thought. In face of the manifold national calamities, the prophets had looked forward to a time when God would interpose on behalf of His people. He would deliver them from their oppressors and forgive their sins and establish them in peace and righteousness under His own dominion. This prophetic hope was further elaborated by the apocalyptic writers. They also set their hearts on a future redemption of Israel, but they conceived of it as the central incident of a world-wide transformation. God would make all things new, alike in the order of nature and in human society. He would bring to an end the present age, with all its evils and imperfections, and inaugurate a better age, in which He would reign for ever over the people of His inheritance. The anticipation of this coming age had taken deep root in the Jewish mind; and immediately before the advent of Jesus it had received a fresh vitality from the preaching of John the Baptist. John declared not only that the Kingdom of God was certain, but that it was now close at hand. He offered his baptism of repentance that men might prepare themselves for the approaching Judgment, whereby God would sift out for Himself His new community.

Jesus accepted the idea of the Kingdom as it had come down to Him in the current tradition. To Him, as to the people generally, the Kingdom lay in the

future, and was to be accomplished through the immediate act of God. It involved the breaking in of a new order, in which all things would be brought into perfect conformity with the Divine will. But while thus announcing a future Kingdom, Jesus believed that it was already projecting its influence into the present. Its powers were manifesting themselves in His own works of miracle. It had come so near that men might even now throw in their lot with it and subject their lives to its higher law. One of the purposes He set before Him was to hasten the coming of the Kingdom. By rousing the whole nation to a simultaneous ardour of faith and desire, He hoped to prevail on God to shorten the brief interval, and grant an immediate fulfilment to His promises. While to all appearance Jesus was only a herald of the Kingdom, like His predecessor, He thus knew Himself from the outset to be something more. He felt that in Him the new order had its guarantee and representative. On His work and personality its coming was, in some sort, dependent.

His consciousness of Messiahship was the outcome of this more general sense of a relation to the Kingdom. Old Testament prophecy had foretold a great King of the house of David through whom God would effect the future deliverance of Israel; and this ancient hope had subsequently been harmonised with the apocalyptic scheme. The promised Son of David had come to be identified with a heavenly being who

would appear in the last days—executing the Judgment and inaugurating the Kingdom, as the deputy of God. John the Baptist had conjoined his announcement of the new age with a reference to this supernatural person who would preside over its coming; but it does not appear that Jesus, in His earlier ministry, assigned any prominence to the Messianic idea. He was wholly occupied with the thought of the Kingdom itself; and the ordinary speculations as to the mode and instrumentality of its coming concerned Him little. But His sense of a personal relation to the Kingdom asserted itself ever more powerfully; and the only category that was adequate to explain it was that of Messiahship. His dawning surmise that He was the Messiah was strengthened by His reflection on John the Baptist, in whom He recognised Elijah the Fore-runner. It was finally confirmed by the new Messianic conception that grew up in His mind—largely through the influence of Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant. His premonitions of His own calling and destiny found a response in this great passage of Scripture; and when He had once interpreted it in the Messianic sense, He could doubt of Himself no longer.

The claim of Jesus to the Messiahship was conditioned by His view of the Kingdom. In so far as the Kingdom was foreshadowed in His life and work, He could think of Himself as already Messiah. But the Kingdom had only come by anticipation;

and His Messiahship likewise was latent and potential. He required to wait until the time of the consummation before He could be invested with His higher attributes. It was in view of this latency of His Messiahship that He applied to Himself the apocalyptic name of Son of man. The name was intended to point forward to what He would yet be, and thus to explain the seeming contradictions of His present lot. But while He used it primarily with reference to His future exaltation, He also associated it, in a significant manner, with His suffering and death. By this He sought to indicate that His death was itself to be the beginning of the consummation. Through His sacrifice of Himself He was to attain to the Messianic dignity. Through His sacrifice, also, He was to initiate the series of final events, which would culminate in the fulfilment of the Kingdom.

It has been customary to assume that there was little more than a formal agreement between the teaching of Jesus and the apocalyptic hopes of His time. He spoke, no doubt, of the Kingdom of God, and even described it under the traditional imagery. But the Kingdom had another meaning to Him than to His contemporaries. Where they looked forward to a new age which would break in suddenly and miraculously, He conceived of an inward process, a purely spiritual consummation. But there is no evidence that Jesus put a new construction on the

idea of the Kingdom. When we are content to take His sayings in their plain and natural interpretation, it seems quite apparent that He shared in the current hope and did not attempt, in any way, to transform it. He was indeed the bearer of a new message, infinite in its significance; but its newness did not consist in some peculiar doctrine of the Kingdom. To understand the originality of Jesus we must look not so much at His central idea of the Kingdom as at those ideas which appear, at first sight, to be subsidiary to it. He accepted the ancient hope as He found it, but He gave it a new application. He connected it with great conceptions of His own which were capable of an endless development. In three directions more particularly, He so interpreted the hope of the Kingdom as to make it the point of departure for an entirely new message.

(1) He associated it with a higher ethical teaching. The Kingdom, He believed, was presently to be established, and He sought to realise to Himself what law would prevail in it—what manner of will and disposition would be required of its members. For the imperfect rules of conduct which had come down from "them of old time," He substituted this morality of the Kingdom. He taught men how they might even now become children of the new age by conforming themselves to its law. The moral teaching of Jesus was no doubt the outcome of His own profound sympathy with the will of God. But His vision of the

Kingdom was the necessary background against which His thoughts and intuitions were able to stand out clearly. The moral law, as He conceived it, was the law of the Kingdom. A new righteousness would manifest itself, as the counterpart to the new order.

(2) He connected the idea of the Kingdom with that of a closer relation between man and God. Here again His thought had its ultimate ground in His own inward life. He was conscious of a fellowship with God so intimate in its nature that it could only be described as the communion of a Son with a Father. But He explained to Himself this sense of a filial dependence on God, by means of His idea of the Kingdom. In the great future that was at hand God would make a new covenant with men. They would have perfect insight into His will and would no longer be separated from Him by their trespasses and sins. Jesus could feel that He had Himself anticipated this new relation to God. Through Him men might know God now as they would know Him hereafter, and call Him "our Father."

(3) He identified the Messiah who would bring in the Kingdom with Himself. In the mere outward claim to Messiahship there was nothing new and extraordinary; for the title lay ready to hand, and we know of others, in the period of revolutionary Judaism, who aspired to a national leadership on the strength of it. But Jesus did not simply arrogate to Himself a consecrated title. He transfused the whole

Messianic conception with His own spirit. He brought it into harmony with His new ideal of the kingly vocation. Jesus, in His own Person, took the place of the traditional Messiah. By His claim to the office He asserted His own inherent right to be Judge and Saviour—King in the new community of God's people.

There are two factors, therefore, which everywhere work together in the recorded message of Jesus. On the one hand, He drew directly out of the inward springs of His personal life. He could say truly that "all things had been delivered unto Him by the Father";—he was indebted to no tradition, but to the immediate revelation of God. But, on the other hand, this personal message was involved with certain current beliefs, and was in a measure determined by them. He shared in the anticipation of a Kingdom of God, shortly to be inaugurated through a series of mysterious events. On the basis of this anticipation He built up His new teaching of the absolute morality, the true relation to God, the supreme worth of His own life and Person. Thus while we recognise the unique originality of Jesus, we cannot but admit that His message was bound up at every point with the apocalyptic ideas of His own time. To what extent does this affect the permanent validity of the message?

It has been maintained that our whole estimate of Jesus must necessarily change its character, when we once realise the conditions under which He worked.

"The historical Jesus is to our time a stranger and an enigma. He belongs to His own age, and cannot be transported into ours."[1] The world in which He lived and moved was that Jewish apocalyptic world which has now become utterly foreign to us. Even where His thought appears to be purely ethical and religious, it was so deeply rooted in apocalyptic ideas that we cannot ascribe to it any permanent value or meaning. A view like this, however, is hardly to be considered seriously. It is sufficiently answered by the actual history of the Christian Church, in which the teaching of Jesus has never ceased to be a living power. Within a generation after His death the presuppositions from which He had set out were already half-forgotten; but the message itself was as luminous as before. It has been apprehended in a different manner by each successive age, but has always gone home with the same appeal. Whatever may have been the limitations which were imposed on Jesus by the beliefs of His own time, He has never been "a stranger and an enigma." His meaning has been intelligible, like that of no other teacher, to all races and generations of men.

A view which is hardly less extreme in the other direction has been advocated by Father Tyrrell, in the book published since his death.[2] Admitting to the full, and even exaggerating, the apocalyptic element in Jesus' teaching, he would yet claim for

[1] Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, ch. xx.
[2] Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads.*

it a vital place in Christianity. Religion, he argues, is more than a moral discipline. It concerns itself with man's relation to the hereafter and the world of the unseen; and by His apocalyptic teaching Jesus laid emphasis on this relation. As a mystical and visionary even more than as an ethical religion, Christianity has answered to the deepest needs of the human heart. It is impossible to deny a certain measure of truth to Tyrrell's argument. The apocalyptic element is necessary to religion; and without it the loftiest spiritual teaching is apt to go for little. Our Christianity can never simply discard those vivid imaginative forms under which the truth was first proclaimed by Jesus. Yet the attempt to prove an essential value in those forms is futile by its very nature. They belonged to a given time, and presuppose a view of the world and of human history to which we can no longer yield assent. They have no part, moreover, in the authentic revelation of Jesus. He merely took them over from the current tradition, and they are native to the soil, not of Christian, but of Jewish, thought. The new religion, as soon as it became fully conscious of itself, felt the need of modifying the ancient forms, or of replacing them by others, more in harmony with its distinctive teaching.

We cannot but conclude that the message of Jesus, closely as it was related to the apocalyptic beliefs of His time, was in the last resort independent

of them. They provided the categories in which it was first delivered, and impressed it, by so doing, with a peculiar character. Our Lord's conceptions of the moral law, of the new relation to God, of the worth of His own personality, of the significance of His death, would all have taken a different shape if He had lived under other conditions than those of apocalyptic Judaism. But the conceptions themselves are separable from the forms that moulded them. They have a truth and validity of their own, and remain essentially the same, in whatever new forms they may express themselves from age to age. We must ever distinguish between the framework of traditional ideas which Jesus borrowed, and the new message which originated with Himself. It is this message of His own that constitutes Christianity; and it had its sources in an immediate experience of God, unique in the world's history. "No man hath known the Father but the Son."

The revelation of Jesus, therefore, is in no way dependent on those apocalyptic ideas and beliefs in which it was at first embodied. Its inner meaning has always been apparent to Christian faith, through all the obscurities of the ancient forms. Yet the forms themselves are not to be thrown aside as empty and superfluous. It was through them that Jesus imparted His message; and they have a real and abiding value for Christian thought.

In the first place they have exercised an influence which can hardly be over-estimated on the historical development of Christianity. It began as an apocalyptic religion; and amidst all the modifications of the primitive hopes, it continued to bear this character. The great Christian doctrines were all built up on the groundwork of apocalyptic belief. The Church itself came into existence as the new Israel—the nucleus of that chosen community which would inherit the Kingdom when the Messiah returned in glory. To this very day, in its worship and sacraments and even in its outward constitution, the Church preserves its links with the apocalyptic tradition. That tradition has thus interwoven itself with the whole history of our religion. For us also it has become, in some degree, what it was to Jesus—the necessary form by which we apprehend the higher truth. We cannot discard it without sacrificing something of that essential message which has clung to it through the centuries.

Apart, however, from their influence on historical Christianity, the apocalyptic ideas employed by Jesus have still their truth and value. The conception of the Kingdom of God, on which He based His gospel, was determined for Him by contemporary Judaism; but in its essence it is fundamental to all religion. Amidst the imperfections of the present, men have ever looked forward to some glorious consummation, and have lived and worked in the

faith of it. To the prophets of Israel it was the new age of righteousness—to the Greek thinkers, the world of pure intelligible forms—to Augustine and Dante, the holy theocratic state—to the practical thought of our own time, the renovated social order. Each successive age will frame to itself its own vision of the great fulfilment; but all the different ideals can find their place in that message of the Kingdom which was proclaimed by Jesus. He expressed it, for He could not do otherwise, in the language of His own time; but the aspiration which He cherished will ever find its response in the hearts of men. "Thy Kingdom come—thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Jesus foretold the coming of that Kingdom, and transformed the dream of it into a living hope. In His own Person He was the Messiah of the Kingdom. The title to which He laid claim was inherited by Him from a bygone world of Jewish thought; but He filled it with a new and lasting significance by identifying it with Himself. He has taught us to see in Him the Anointed One—the chosen Leader of mankind, by whom God will bring in His Kingdom.

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